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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

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## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

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# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 18 December 1996

Mercredi 18 décembre 1996



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 18 December 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 18 décembre 1996

*The House met at 1333.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** Ontario's teachers and students deserve a pat on the back, not a kick in the pants, which is what the Minister of Education continually does when he gets up to speak about education in Ontario. During Monday's question period, in response to a question from myself and one from the member for Durham East, the minister stated: "Surely we are number one in spending. Unfortunately, we're not number one in student achievement." These mistruths continue to be spread to justify this government's massive cuts in educational spending.

The facts speak louder than the myth-making of the Minister of Education. According to Stats Canada, for the year 1995-96 Ontario stood sixth in educational spending per pupil, not first, as the minister attempts to imply. We are behind BC, Quebec, Manitoba and the two territories. In reality, Ontario spends 2.4%, or \$160, above the Canadian average. Given Ontario's cost of living, high-density society, highly diverse and great special educational needs, adult re-entry needs and inflow of immigrant families, Ontario's costs are understandable and justified. Even the former deputy minister has admitted that these comparisons are not in order.

What about the educational standards? According to the Premier's own views, Ontario has a top-grade educational system. How about the prestigious Carl Bertelsmann Foundation, which named the Durham board — yes, the Durham board, for the member for Durham East — as the best in the world in meeting the needs of its students in innovative ways?

Ontario's educational system is not broken, as the Minister of Education asserts —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

**Mr Patten:** You're welcome.

### GOVERNMENT CONSULTANTS

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** In the last couple of days we've seen two separate but, interestingly enough and sadly enough, I think related examples of what this Harris government is all about in terms of governing by consultants and governing with a complete disrespect for the services needed for people.

We saw earlier in the week a report released by one consulting company, KPMG, which tried to draw an

accounting textbook approach to governing in the Metropolitan Toronto area in saying, "You could find all these great savings" — most of which, by the way, have nothing to do with consolidation of municipalities — "but you can also do it by laying off 4,500 people and cutting services," including services like fire services and various other services.

Then, just yesterday, we saw another example from another consulting company, this time dealing with services provided to women and children who are victims of abuse. Here again, the same approach is being applied, which is to say that you can simply, in a bottom-line approach, cut these services, have women who are victims of abuse go back to their homes or go wherever they may be able to go, without any regard to the fact that we are talking here about people who are victims of abuse, people who require more protection, not less protection.

### ONTARIO APPLES

**Mr Gary Fox (Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings):** As we took our places today we noticed an apple on the tables in front of us. No, the apples did not come from the sky and hit us on the head, leading to great insights, as happened to Sir Isaac Newton. Nor did we have to place them on our heads and risk being hit by an arrow, as happened to William Tell. Nor did we have to be coy about our apples, as pictures of Eve in the Garden of Eden would have us believe. These Empire apples are compliments of the Ontario apple growers through the Ontario Apple Marketing Commission. Each member's office has received a gift box containing Empire, Red Delicious, Crispin, Matsu, and Ontario's very own McIntosh.

We have been generously given the same fresh, top-quality apples enjoyed by people throughout Ontario and indeed around the world. The apple crop in Ontario is almost two thirds of our fresh fruit crop, and this year's harvest, while down 20% from last year, is still approximately 12 million bushels. These apples have been presented to us to bring to the attention of the House the fact that the group of Ontario apple packers is establishing a distribution network that will compete with those who import apples into the province. This will give Ontario the competitive edge it needs to compete in the world market.

### VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** My statement should be on tomatoes, but today it's on VLTs. On Monday of this week, my colleague from St Catharines



advised the House that the National Council on Welfare released a report on gambling that confirms yet again that VLTs are highly addictive, that they are indeed the crack cocaine of gambling, and it is governments who, in their addiction to revenue, are impoverishing the most vulnerable in our society.

Throughout the public hearings on Bill 75, witness after witness, submission after submission denounced the government's plan to forge ahead with implementing VLTs in every bar and restaurant, on every corner, in every community in Ontario. The list of municipalities that have passed resolutions prohibiting these machines in their communities grows weekly.

I and many of my colleagues and even some from the government back benches have spoken against these insidious machines and their highly addictive nature because we understand that VLTs prey upon the most vulnerable in society, because they will increase the propensity for criminal activity and because they can destroy families and disrupt communities.

The recommendations of the National Council on Welfare emphasized the seriousness of addiction to VLTs. I say to this government to follow the recommendations of the National Council on Welfare and completely ban VLTs outside highly regulated areas such as casinos and racetracks.

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#### SPRUCE FALLS INC

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** Today I want to share with the members of the Legislature one of the greatest success stories in northern Ontario, in Kapuskasing.

On December 3, Spruce Falls Inc marked an important milestone: its five years of prosperity. In 1991, with the help of the NDP government, company employees, Kapuskasing and area residents, and Tembec Inc assumed ownership of Spruce Falls Power and Paper Company, saving the whole community from a dark future.

This example clearly demonstrates that when a government chooses to invest in people and communities and to build partnerships with all the parties to find practical solutions, great things can be accomplished. Today there are more than 1,000 workers on the payroll and there are plans for another \$400 million to be invested in a new paper machine.

It hasn't been easy, but thanks to the commitment and dedication of all the employees, Spruce Falls Inc went from being a high-cost producer of newsprint to one of the most cost-efficient newsprint mills in North America. Spruce Falls Inc reported net earnings of \$83.1 million this year.

On behalf of my NDP colleagues, I'd like to congratulate the people of Cochrane North and the employees of Spruce Falls Inc on their accomplishments and wish the company many more successful years.

This is a good opportunity to wish all the members of the Legislature and the people of Kapuskasing and Cochrane North a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.

I want to share an article: "Top Performers: Kap Mill Celebrates Fifth Year," and on the other side, "The

Making of a New Company." It's good news for Cochrane North.

#### VOICE OF PAKISTAN

**Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West):** Let me begin my statement today with an Islamic blessing for all members of the House: In the name of Allah, the merciful, the compassionate.

On December 29, we will proudly mark an important milestone celebration in the life of the Pakistani Canadian community: the silver jubilee of the Voice of Pakistan program on CHIN Radio. Ontarians of Pakistani background have enriched Canada with their dynamic traditions. What I personally most admire about them is their great devotion to their Islamic faith, the religion of Allah and his prophet Muhammad — peace be upon him — and their efforts among their young people to instil pride in their identity.

The Voice of Pakistan continues to play an important role in the handing down of these traditions. It helps first-generation Canadians of Pakistani origin adapt to their new country while keeping solid ties with the homeland they left behind. It is a medium of culturally relevant information for the community and is also a focus of its unity and identity.

Joining me in the House today are prominent members of the Pakistani Canadian community: Ayub Kureshy, the director of Voice of Pakistan, Gul Nawaz, Zubair Choudry and Ilyas Kureshy. On behalf of the government of Ontario and as the member for Scarborough West, I am proud to extend my warmest congratulations to you and through you to the entire Pakistani community of Ontario.

#### ACUTE CARE

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** Earlier this week the Minister of Health informed the board of directors of the Thunder Bay Regional Hospital that no further consideration will be given to the development of a new hospital in Thunder Bay. What does that mean? It means that despite the board's incredible tenacity and commitment, this government is determined to move forward with its vision for acute care in our city. They will move forward despite lingering, legitimate questions about the actual costs of a redevelopment of the Port Arthur General site, let alone the true costs for a new acute care site in the city.

If this is the final decision by the minister, forcing us to move forward with their imposed plan, it is absolutely vital that the minister make solid commitments in two crucial areas:

(1) If the costs for redevelopment exceed the ministry's present estimate of \$64.3 million, the ministry must be obliged to cover any extra costs.

(2) If the minister wants the people of Thunder Bay to support the decision, they should hire an independent consultant to verify those costs so that 10 years down the road we're not looking at final costs that would have matched the costs of a new site.

The people of Thunder Bay have fought long and hard for what they believe is needed for health care in our



community. I want to thank everyone who has rallied around this issue to send a message to the minister that we will not accept anything less than the highest health care standards for our community. There are many issues related to the integration of health care that must still be fought for. We can only hope that the minister recognizes the turmoil and anxiety this issue has generated and will come forward with a commitment to do what I've asked for today.

#### OSTEOPETROSIS TREATMENT

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** I'm going to tell you about Damon Albanese. He's going to turn five years old on Christmas Day, but he's not going to have his birthday in Welland, where he's from and where his family lives, because he is right now at Wyler Children's Hospital, University of Chicago. This young guy, who's as bright, active, cheerful and tenacious a little guy as you're ever going to meet, suffers from osteopetrosis, with a life expectancy, when he was born, of two years. Two bone marrow transplants, you see, because osteopetrosis, a bone disorder, causes loss of vision, hearing loss, the phenomenon of broken bones. In the case of broken bones they don't repair; they've got to be amputated.

This government gave up on Damon Albanese, notwithstanding our pleas from Welland for this government and its Minister of Health to accommodate Damon for bone marrow transplant here in Ontario through the OHIP system. This government betrayed him, but the people of Welland and Niagara region and the province, and indeed across the country, throughout the United States and Europe, didn't. They didn't turn their backs on this little boy the way this government did. They raised \$172,000 so that young Damon has a chance to live something akin to a normal life.

It's shameful that Damon and his family have to go to the University of Chicago for that treatment and have to pay for it privately out of private sector funds. It's shameful that this government talks a big game about kids but turns its back on them.

#### KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS LADIES' AUXILIARY

**Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South):** I rise in the House today to recognize the kind and charitable actions of the Fort Erie Knights of Columbus Ladies' Auxiliary Council 3320. Elaine Greggain, Wilma Morlog, Emily Yando, Laura Hodges and Diane Schandi have dedicated an enormous amount of time to knitting wool blankets and scarves. They brought these gifts to my constituency office last week, requesting that I bring them to Toronto for the homeless. They felt it important to extend their goodwill beyond our community, even though they will never know the beneficiaries of their kind actions. Yesterday I delivered the blankets and scarves to the Scott Mission on Spadina Avenue. With the arrival of winter, I know their gifts will be put to very good use. I applaud the Knights of Columbus Ladies' Auxiliary for their altruistic and benevolent deed. I believe these kind women truly represent community spirit and volunteerism.

I know these women, like many other constituents in my riding, are very concerned about potential impact of the Niagara District Health Council's hospital restructuring committee report on Fort Erie and Port Colborne. Let me assure them that I will be standing with the people of Fort Erie and with the people of Port Colborne for better health care. I believe that through the consultation process of the Niagara DHC, we can together come up with a better health care solution for the people of Niagara South.

#### RONALD GLEN HODGSON

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines):** I believe we have unanimous consent to say a few words about my uncle, who passed away last Thursday.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** It's with great sadness that I rise today to inform the House of the passing of R. Glen Hodgson. The "R" stood for Ronald, but he always went by the name Glen. He passed away in his 71st year last Thursday evening. He left behind his wife, Shirley, four children, his grandchildren, brothers and sisters and a number of nieces and nephews.

With the pleasure of the House, I'd just like to say a few words about my uncle. He was a member who served Victoria-Haliburton from 1963 to 1975. Prior to entering public life, he was a partner and owner of a logging operation in Haliburton county. He was an honorary member for 28 years in the Ontario Forest Products Accident Prevention Association. He served his community in a number of capacities, including on Dysart council. He was the chairman of the telephone commission. In the Legislature he was the caucus chair for three years. He was chairman of numerous standing committees in the Ontario Legislature, in particular for two years as Chairman of the standing committee on implementation of new rules and structures — many of those are still in place today — and the Chairman of the select committee on rules and procedures.

We have a fairly close family and my early recollection of Uncle Glen was that he shared the same family affliction that my father and aunts and uncles all share, and that is this uncontrollable compulsion to always give advice, even when it's not asked for, but it was always advice given not out of his own self-interest but because he cared about what his nieces and nephews were up to.

1350

I got to know Uncle Glen better in the 1980s, when he was on Dysart council but away from the Legislature. It was at hunting camp. His favourite season of the year was hunting season. In the early 1980s I decided to try it, and I've gone back every year since. One of the things that you enjoy is the camaraderie of the hunt, but after the hunt, after the arguments about where the dogs ran and how many deer and who missed and who shot have died down, in the evenings you sit around and occasionally play cards. It's dealer's choice, as long as you play seven card stud for quarters. Throughout the evening my uncle and some older members of the community would sit around and talk about stories, about the history



of the community, about people in the community, occasionally about politics and quite often about how the Leafs were going to make a revival that year.

At the end of the evening, when the card game was over and my uncle had driven home, you'd be left with this understanding of how deeply he cared about the people in our community and about the traditions of our community and about the lifestyle of people in rural Ontario. This understanding I have grown to appreciate more and more since those days. We subsequently had numerous afternoons of talking at the cottage around history and politics, and spending the odd day in a car campaigning in the last two elections I've been involved in. I grew to appreciate his service to the community and what it meant to be a member of the provincial Legislature from 1963 to 1975.

Members who were here in those years would appreciate that there was no constituency staff, there was no one to help you out with inquiries from your constituents and yet the province had become a modern province. In 1963-64 the first \$1-billion budget was passed and by 1975 it was approaching \$10 billion. Tremendous change in those years: Huge bureaucracies grew up, ministries doubled in size and quadrupled in staff, and yet a member from rural Ontario did rather well. We got our fair share. People were given a fair hearing.

He had a deep appreciation for the British tradition and the process of the Legislature. Through that people were treated fairly. That was the role of government: to help people. Whether he was serving as a father or as an uncle or as a member of the Legislature or as a member of the Dysart council or even, in retirement, as the mayor of Haliburton Lake, he served with integrity. He was his own man. He thought about a situation in a thoughtful and unselfish manner. He will be missed.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** On behalf of the Liberal caucus, I am pleased to pay tribute to Glen Hodgson, who served his constituents so well as a member of this assembly, and of course the people of Victoria-Haliburton in many other ways as he strived to be a person who was interested in, concerned about and involved in public service.

I cannot, just as the representative of the New Democratic Party cannot, speak in the same way about Mr Hodgson as does the Minister of Natural Resources, who in a very personal way knew him as part of the extended family. I'm very pleased to hear the words that he brought forward today because he shared with members of the assembly, many of whom are new, some insights into an individual whom we know only as a person from a biography or as a person we perhaps read about in the days when he was a member.

His involvement with the government caucus was rather interesting in that he held some titles that are difficult to hold. Chairman of the government caucus for three years is indeed a challenge. Anybody who has had that position recognizes that you have to balance a lot of basketballs at the same time or juggle an awful lot of instruments in your hand while trying to please everyone within a caucus. It takes a special kind of person to do that, a person with a special personality, as Glen had. I'm sure that although cursed on a day or two by those who

didn't get their way on that day, he was nevertheless loved by all members of the caucus and appreciated for that service. As well, he was deputy whip for three years under Premier John Robarts, again not always an easy position. Wherever you have to make a call, wherever you have to decide one person speaks instead of another person or where you have to round up the government troops, if I can call them that, who want to be back in the constituency for a very important event but must be in this House for a vote, that's a challenging job as well. He took it on willingly and did a good job in that regard, because of course the government did not fall on any of those occasions, so he must have been doing his job.

He was on some rather interesting committees. Members will know that today we don't have as many select committees as we once had. He was a member of the select committee on economic and cultural nationalism in 1971 and 1972, which is an indication of the kind of issues that we had to deal with as a province in those days. He was Chairman of the standing committee on the implementation of new rules and structure in the Ontario Legislature and Chairman of the select committee on rules and procedures. The government House leader must wish that he had consulted with him previous to his passing, because he may have had some insights. He might have been surprised at the rules under which we live today in that probably the rules in those days were much more accommodating of the opposition than they are today.

But it was an important job nevertheless, important because he was in a majority government, because he had to take into account the views of the government but also the views of all members of the Legislature. If anyone had an opportunity to read his résumé and to learn a bit about him, they would see that the name of the game for Glen Hodgson was public service in any capacity.

We've heard, most appropriately, of the personal relationship that the present member for Victoria-Haliburton had with his uncle. I suspect that most people in his community, perhaps even all members in the community, would share that point of view of Glen Hodgson as a true public servant, as a good constituency person, remembering that probably Shirley was the "secretary," as they might have said in those days. Because there were not constituency offices, Shirley and members of the immediate family would be answering the phone and helping out in many ways, probably even to a deeper extent than is the case today.

To Shirley and all members of the family and to the present member for Victoria-Haliburton, those of us in the Liberal caucus convey our sincere sympathy but also our shared feeling of pride in a person who has served our province and his constituency well.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** On behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus and particularly the dean of the House, the member for Nickel Belt, who couldn't be here to speak about Glen Hodgson, I want to express our condolences to his widow and children and grandchildren, and particularly to the Minister of Natural Resources.

We all listened with care to the obviously heartfelt comments of the member for Victoria-Haliburton, and I must say I was touched by them. I also recognize that



while this is a loss to the family, it's a loss to the community. This was an individual who served his constituents well in this House and, after leaving this place, continued to serve and be committed to his community. We should be celebrating that fact, and I know the current member is doing that today, as well as feeling a sense of loss.

I would say, after hearing the comments by the Minister of Natural Resources about his uncle, that perhaps all of us in this assembly should really think very carefully about some of the ways we express ourselves and express views about politics and politicians today. At a time when the currency of politics and politicians is devalued, perhaps we should think of the contributions of people like Glen Hodgson before we play to that kind of popular view out there and think of all the people who have served us so well over the years in Ontario and continue to serve us well, as Mr Hodgson did.

With that, I would just simply say on behalf of my colleagues and, as I said, particularly the member for Nickel Belt, who is the only member of the House currently serving to have served with Mr Hodgson, that we express our sincere sympathies to Mrs Hodgson, her children and grandchildren and the whole family, including the current Minister of Natural Resources.

**The Speaker:** I will endeavour to ensure that the comments get back to the family, although I am certain they will in another fashion.

1400

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** I have a question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Minister, it seems that every December some strange spirit takes over your government; but it isn't the spirit of Christmas, it's the spirit of dictatorship. Last year it was Bill 26, this year it's megacity madness.

Yesterday you made some astonishing statements in this House. You said that the 2.3 million people who live in Metro can have all the referendums they want, but you and the Premier are not going to listen, no matter what they say. You're going to ram the megacity down their throats anyway. Minister, this megacity you are imposing by decree was not in the Common Sense Revolution. Where did you get the right to suspend democracy in Metro and ram this down the throats of the citizens of Metro?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** In response to the member for Oakwood, it is in the Common Sense Revolution, if the members opposite would like to turn to page 17. I am sure that the position of the government in eliminating duplication and waste, reducing the number of levels of government, levels of municipal government — it's quite clear to me that it says that each area in the province should be looked upon on its own merits.

With respect to the referendum, as I mentioned yesterday, a referendum is not appropriate when there are

a multitude of questions that would have to be asked to satisfy the needs of all the people of the Metro area.

**Mr Colle:** Minister, you may call this monster you're creating a megacity, but let me tell you what the people of Metro Toronto are calling it. They're calling it a mega-mistake. They're calling it megalomania. They're calling you the tinpot dictator of Metro.

Why are you showing such contempt for the people of Metro? Why, in the 905 area and the rest of the province, are you giving them a say and setting up facilitators, yet here in Metro you're treating us like second-class citizens and dictating and saying we can't have a say? Why the different treatment for Metro?

**Hon Mr Leach:** That question comes from Mr Amalgamation, by the way, the person who was in favour of amalgamation when he was on Metro council, when he was running for council. It's amazing the way positions change from day to day.

However, this is a question that has been debated within the Metro area since 1966. There was a referendum in 1969, which was successful. It came up again in 1978. It has been debated by, I believe, just about every council since that time. The only thing that was lacking in making this move was the political will to do so. This government is prepared to make those difficult decisions. We have and we will.

**Mr Colle:** This is the same minister who was a co-chair of the Trimmer commission that said, "Keep local government." This is the same minister who set up the Burnham-Shea report that said, "Keep local government." This is the same minister who said he was against MVA, was going to oppose it. So don't tell me about double standards, Minister.

Let's call this what it is. If this were taking place in a foreign country and the government-appointed trustees were to take over control of the largest city, if it were imposed on the people without their will, we would all denounce it as an imposition of martial law. We would say, "This is a coup d'état." We would say, "This is a tinpot dictatorship."

Minister, you have even gone as far as to put yourself and your trustees above the law. In your own legislation you say, "The decisions of the board of trustees are final and shall not be reviewed or questioned by the courts." You can't even question. Who gave you the authority to be above the law? Where is it in the blue book that you're above the law?

**Hon Mr Leach:** The member brings up the question of the trustees and what powers they should have and whether we should have them. Why should we have a board of trustees? Let me count the ways: The city of Toronto board of management this morning passed a motion to transfer all of its reserves to a non-profit corporation. I think perhaps that might be a good reason why we need somebody to look after the affairs of the citizens of this area. We're looking after the taxpayers' dollars. We want to make sure the taxpayer is protected even if you don't.

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. It has to do with the property taxpayer and the impact of the megacity proposal on property taxpayers. There's no



question that property taxpayers fear that this is going to result in increased property taxes. We have the embarrassing sight, frankly, of your commissioning a three-week study on something this fundamental. Believe me, if you were in the private sector, you'd be fired for trying to run a business like this.

You're asking us to make an informed decision on Metro without all the facts. We know that in a few weeks you plan to table property tax legislation that will result in, we understand, \$500 million of Metro's property tax being taken out of Metro and spent elsewhere in the province. If you want us to make an informed decision and the people of Metro to make an informed decision, will you table this essential property tax legislation today so it can be part of our debate on Metro?

**Hon Mr Leach:** Again, I can only assume the members opposite do their research through three-month-old copies of the *Toronto Star*, because the stories on assessment review, what would happen with assessment review, the effects of assessment review, were all discussed openly and publicly months and months ago.

We will be bringing in legislation in the near future on property tax reform, and I'll make sure the members opposite are the first to get a copy.

**Mr Phillips:** I would just say to the public watching this, you can understand the problems we have with this minister. He didn't even understand the question. The question was, "Will you table that legislation?" I gather you're saying you won't now.

I'll go back to a few things you've said, Minister, because it all relates to residential property tax, and this is the question people want answered. You have said to this Legislature you were reducing property tax on apartments. You've said that. You've said you were going to reduce property tax on business. You have said that you were going to cut grants to municipalities by hundreds of millions of dollars, and your new legislation is going to take millions of dollars, hundreds of millions of dollars, of property tax out of Metro.

The question is this: You have said all of those things. Will you present to the people of Metropolitan Toronto the impact on their property tax of all these various pieces of property tax manoeuvres you are planning so that we can make an informed, sensible decision on this megacity?

**Hon Mr Leach:** As in my previous answer when I advised the member that this issue has been discussed for many, many months, there is no tax grab; there is a tax shift. There will be a new, fair and equitable system of taxation brought in for all of the residents of the province of Ontario and particularly those in Metropolitan Toronto. There are a number of people in Metropolitan Toronto whose tax bills are too high at the present time, and we want to bring that back to fairness. There are a number of people in Metropolitan Toronto whose taxes are too low. This proposal that we're bringing in will bring fairness and equity, and we will table that in the very near future.

**Mr Phillips:** Surely if you want the people of Ontario, the people of Metro, to make an informed decision on your legislation, it demands that you provide that infor-

mation. You have indicated that some people in Metro Toronto are paying too low taxes. We need to know that.

You are asking us to proceed with legislation that fundamentally changes the most successful urban area in North America. That's without question. You are asking us to proceed with legislation to change Metro without telling us how education is going to be handled. Some 55% of property tax in Metropolitan Toronto is education. You are asking us to proceed without tabling the legislation that you've already indicated is fundamental to property tax reform. Surely, Minister, even you would appreciate that you are asking the Legislature to proceed without the essential elements of the decision-making. Will you provide the property taxpayers of Metro with a clear answer on the impact on their property tax of your megacity proposal?

**Hon Mr Leach:** To repeat, the issue of property tax reform in Metro is another issue that has been debated by all levels of government — local government, Metro and the Legislature — over the past five years. Everybody in Metropolitan Toronto is well aware of the shifts in taxes that are going to take place when a fair and equitable property tax reform is introduced. I doubt if there's one member opposite who isn't aware of the shifts in taxes that are going to take place, but those shifts in taxes are going to bring fairness and equity back into the system. A very difficult political decision to make: We had the will to make it.

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#### SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is for the minister responsible for women's issues. I want to tell the minister that people across this province are shocked that your government would seriously consider a report which recommends pushing women out of crisis homes and women's shelters after less than 48 hours.

This is what somebody from the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres said when she was contacted by your ministry: "I told her that transition houses and rape crisis centres were the great achievements of our generation toward ending violence against women. I reminded her that transition houses and rape crisis centres save women's lives and that the public has been supportive of them since their creation and the public would not wish for their destruction."

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Question.

**Mr Hampton:** Minister, how can you seriously be even considering this report? How can you even give it a minute of second thought? I'm calling for you today to say that you are not going to consider this report, that this recommendation of 48 hours is —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues):** First of all, I wouldn't agree with the interpretation of the 48-hour recommendation, but even if the member opposite is right, he hasn't got cause for concern. It is not our intent to ask women to leave shelters until they can go to a safe environment and I want to make that very clear.



**Mr Hampton:** We made some headway in a day. We're going to go a bit further here.

Let me put this in context, what people find so shocking. We've done some of the numbers and we know that your government, through your tax scheme, is going to give bank chairs and bank presidents \$200,000 in tax gifts. So put this in context: While you're giving bank presidents \$200,000 in tax gifts, and bank CEOs and bank vice-presidents, how can you even give this report a minute of consideration? I want to hear categorically from you that under no circumstances are you going to force women out of shelters and out of crisis centres, categorically that you're rejecting that totally. I want to hear that from you now.

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** In response to the member's question, there is no recommendation that women be forced out of shelters in the report I read. I should also say that right now the flexibility within shelters from area to area across the province will remain, because anyone who goes to a shelter and any shelter that is trying to take care of women who have been abused and protect their safety should have that kind of flexibility. I'm not going to interfere in how they apply that standard, but that's their job and they're doing it very well.

I should say at the same time that this report is all about what the former government had as a recommendation and they didn't act on it: the absolute need for a structure and a framework for action on the prevention of violence against women. They had almost 100 reports and they never acted on any of them, even to do with the wonderful agreements we have with our Attorney General for domestic assault courts.

**Mr Hampton:** Yes, our government was concerned about providing funding for crisis centres and for women's shelters, and our government was concerned about providing money for counselling and actually conducting a public information program that would say to people, "Say no to violence against women" — all things you've cut. So let's get the record straight.

We phoned some crisis centres and women's shelters, and I say to you very clearly that none of them want this so-called flexibility you're advocating here. They want your government to stand behind shelters and crisis centres and they want you to categorically say you are not going to consider this report, to stand in your place now and say categorically that 48 hours is out and that some of the other damaging things in this report with respect to women and children are out and off. Will you give that commitment?

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** There are many recommendations in this report. Some of them one would agree with, others one may not, but there are some very good recommendations in the report. These are very serious and important issues that the leader of the third party is raising. I value the opportunity to speak about them.

I say to the leader of the third party that once he has thoroughly read the report, he will agree with me that the officials in the nine ministries responsible for the delivery of this program — and he as a former Attorney General for this province should know that improvements must still be made. Some of the recommendations are in this report; other recommendations are coming from the

ministry on a day-to-day basis. The focus of this report and the focus of this government is to make a safer Ontario for women, and that's what we intend to do.

**Mr Hampton:** This report is all about cutting services for women, nothing more than that.

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My next question is for the Attorney General, with respect to the family support plan and the chaos you've created. You've closed down the regional offices, you laid off 290 experienced staff, and now families, women and children, are left scrambling to try to make up for the chaos you've created.

Maria Godin of Sudbury received her last support payment in October. She is now owed over \$650. She's a single parent with a nine-year-old boy, works part-time as a cashier and needs her family support payments to make ends meet. Her mortgage payment is due on Friday, and she doesn't have the money to pay it. She confirmed that the support payor continues to pay money into the family support plan but there it disappears, none of it gets to her.

It's a week before Christmas. My question is this: Will you commit today to provide emergency funding for all those women and children who have not received their money from —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** Certainly we are endeavouring to ensure that payments are made as fast as possible. We've increased the ability to make those payments faster than they have ever been made before.

To respond directly to the member, we are finding, as we track each and every one of these cases, that it's very difficult to say it's always the family support plan's problem. There are many variables. Sometimes there are variables that involve the income source, sometimes there are variables that involve the payor and sometimes we are not in receipt of the correct funds to be able to make that commitment. So what we are continuing to endeavour to do is ensure that we get payments made, that we get them made as fast as possible, and that we continue to improve a plan where three out of four people didn't get paid by the family support plan even though they had an order and were entitled.

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**Mr Hampton:** The Attorney General continues to talk about how he's improving the family support plan. I want to read to the Attorney General his own statistics. These are your figures. Before you closed down the regional offices, the family support plan collected and issued \$44.9 million in support payments for the month of May 1996. In September, after you had closed down the regional offices and laid off 290 staff, the family support plan collected only \$37.2 million in family support, a drop of \$7.7 million after you started to improve the plan. In October, the plan only collected and issued \$28.7 million in family support, a decrease of \$16.2 million after you started to improve the plan. Your own numbers



don't lie, Minister. Since you started cutting the plan, the amount of money that you're collecting and distributing is going down.

I say to you again, will you have the decency now to put in place emergency funding to correct the chaos that's been created by your cuts?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** I want to tell you that in the first week of December 1996, we processed \$15.8 million in payments. A year earlier, in the first week of December 1995, we disbursed \$11.8 million. A year earlier, we disbursed in that same week \$11.8 million. So the amount of moneys being processed is increasing. We have been paying out more money than has ever been paid out before. As it now stands and as we look at the complaints coming in, most of these complaints are complaints of long standing.

**Mr Hampton:** The Attorney General continues this phoney story. We expected that would be your answer, so we checked. The fact is, Mr Attorney General, that much of the money that you are getting out now, in December, was owed in August, in September, in October. All you're doing is getting out money now that should have been gotten out three, four and five months ago. This is not catching up, this is not being up to speed; this is a continuation.

Let me just show you the historical record. In 1991-92, family support collected \$166 million and distributed it. In 1992-93 it was increased to \$221 million. In 1993-94 it went up to \$297 million collected and distributed. In 1994-95 it went up to \$367 million collected. You see, Minister, if you were improving the plan, you'd have to get above that \$367-million figure, you'd have to get above it, not paying out things that you missed in August, September, October and November.

I say to you again that what you have done is you have —

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** When the member was the Attorney General, he could have provided a bill that provided real, good enforcement measures. He elected not to do that. As a result of that, this plan has been in arrears by about —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Minister

**Hon Mr Harnick:** It was the boast of the then Attorney General that he would make sure that 60% of all people were going to be in receipt of full payment of what was due to them. When we took over the government, 23.5% of all recipients were getting what was coming to them. Those five lost years were an abysmal record and we are attempting to re-create a plan that will provide better service and more money to women and children.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In view of the answer given by the Attorney General, I'm wondering how three cheques addressed to no one, from the family support office, would show up at the member for Prescott and Russell's office.

**The Speaker:** It may be a good question, but it's not a point of order.

## SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

**Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview):** My question is also to the Attorney General. The Attorney General has repeatedly voiced in this House his commitment to fight spousal abuse and we on this side of the House want very much to take him at his word. The evidence, however, is quite the contrary. This government has slashed funding for violence against women. It has slashed funding for prevention programs, women's emergency shelters, support programs, legal aid and welfare benefits, to mention a few. Women have little choice but to return home to dangerous situations.

The report released yesterday compounds the problem. It has been panned by everybody who is involved with women who are the subject of violence. The London Sexual Assault Centre and the Genevra House in Sudbury are but two of the centres that have denounced the measures contained in this report. It isn't just a question of the 48-hour limit that is imposed on women in shelters. It has to do with leaving it up to neighbours to report abuse to the authorities and it has to do with not prosecuting offenders because it might lead to reoffence and this will be very expensive for the system.

I therefore would like to ask the Attorney General, as the chief law enforcement officer of this province, will he intervene to protect women from further abuse and assure them that the justice system will continue to prosecute offenders and that women will not —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you, member for Downsview.

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** As this matter deals with the issue of the report, I will refer this to the minister responsible for women's issues.

**Ms Castrilli:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I was asking the Attorney General about prosecutions. I was not asking about the report.

**The Speaker:** I appreciate the point you're making but the minister has every right to refer questions —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I've got to rule first. The minister has every right to refer a question wherever he or she chooses. It's just that simple.

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues):** The violence against women initiatives, as set up by and worked with other, former governments, cross many ministries. I can answer in a very positive way to the concern of the member who asked the question, in that we're very proud of our track record of laying charges here in Ontario. We will continue to do that. That will be our first course. We have set up specialized courts, specialized prosecutors to work with the police. The two courts, one in North York and one in Toronto, will now track the results of these specialized courts, these specialized prosecutors and the charges, which has not been done before, and perhaps we can move forward with even a better system to address the needs of women.

**Ms Castrilli:** I find this very interesting, and I think if the minister is now trying to disown her own report, that is certainly the image that is coming here.

I wonder if the minister might be so kind as to refer the question back to the Attorney General, because my question really has to do with prosecution and defending the rights of women, who are the vulnerable, who are the victims here. I'm not interested in the report. I'm interested in knowing what the Attorney General is prepared to do on the basis of the information we now have.

Are we going to have a situation where dangerous offenders, where people who abuse women are going to be let off scot-free from prosecution on the basis of this report? This is what I want to know, and I'd like assurance from the government that in fact women will not be penalized. They've already been victimized by the system once. Surely they're not going to be victimized by this government and surely they are not going to be victimized by the silence which I see across the way.

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**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** If I could just make a very important clarification, this is not our report. This is a report that was given to the government by a consultant, and we will take into consideration the recommendations as a very small part of the great challenge we have across this province of finding better solutions to protecting women who have been violated. I want to make it extremely clear —

**Mrs Sandra Papatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** Where is your backbone, Dianne?

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Members for Windsor-Riverside and Fort York.

**Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside):** Pardon me?

**The Speaker:** Oh, I'm sorry. Member for —

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** She's not the member for Windsor-Riverside yet.

**The Speaker:** Well, you know who I'm talking to.

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** The recommendations of this report do require very careful and serious analysis. The analysis by the Attorney General will be extremely important. I should say also that the officials in the line ministries, some nine of them, are spending time doing that right now. They're looking at the implications, and I want to make it clear, of the consultant's recommendations. We know that there are other ongoing evaluations of programs, and the bottom line for this government is to develop a framework for the prevention of violence against women.

**The Speaker:** New question, leader of the third party.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I have a question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, but I want to say to the minister responsible for women's issues, you commissioned the report, you paid for it and you hand-picked the consultants to write it.

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: There is a process where governments put out a call for proposals, and maybe this government didn't follow the —

**The Speaker:** It's not a point of privilege.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** It's not a point of privilege. Minister of the Environment, member for Sudbury East, please come to order, and the member for Brant-Haldimand.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** To the Minister of Municipal Affairs: Minister, you've said that you'll ignore the results of any referendum the mayors hold on your megacity, yet you're the government of referendums. You put out this discussion paper called *Your Ontario, Your Choice*, extolling the virtues of referendums. On page 5 you say that as a result of the Charlotte-town accord referendum it was shown that people are wiser, that they deserve to be consulted on these kinds of issues. How can you say that something as complex as a constitutional document should be submitted to a referendum when an issue about how Toronto wants to be governed shouldn't be submitted to a referendum? How do you make that distinction?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I guess I make that distinction in the same way that the leader of the third party makes distinctions when he says referendums aren't required for amalgamations if they happen to be in Hamilton-Wentworth. You got up there and said a referendum isn't appropriate for an amalgamation. The sounds of flip-flops come from both sides now. The member from Hamilton from the Liberal Party, the member from Hamilton from the New Democratic Party and the leader of the third party all say that a referendum is inappropriate for the amalgamation issue, and I agree with them.

**Mr Hampton:** So that the minister is clear, let me put it to you right now. Yes, I believe a referendum is in order in Hamilton, especially after the so-called consensus that you thought you had isn't there. So I think we should have a referendum in Hamilton too.

Minister, we know that you've consulted all your corporate friends at the board of trade. They've all had their say about how Toronto should be governed. What I'm asking you now is: Will you sit down with the mayors — they were elected to help govern the city of Toronto — and develop a referendum question so that all of the people of Metro Toronto can have their say in how they're going to be governed? You've given your corporate friends at the board of trade their say. Will you give the people their say? Will you give them a referendum?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I'm glad that the leader of the third party let the citizens of Ontario know that he'll flip-flop any time it suits his own political agenda.

With respect to meeting with the mayors, we met with the mayors. The Premier and I met with all of the mayors.

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** What about the Trimmer report? Do you remember Joyce Trimmer?

**Mr Hampton:** I shudder to think that you once ran the TTC.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Member for Oakwood, you're going to have to come to order. Leader of the third party, you're going to have to come to order as well. It's near impossible to hear the minister respond.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Lake Nipigon, it's even better if you're not out of order when I'm standing. Thank you. Minister?



**Hon Mr Leach:** We met with the mayors. The Premier and I met with all of the mayors. We discussed the referendum question. We talked about it. We pointed out the problems with a referendum.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** And you didn't agree with them.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** Answer the question.

**Mr Hampton:** Will you give the people a say? What's wrong with democracy?

**The Speaker:** Third party, I'm warning you now. That's officially the warning, I suppose. That's it. I've got to get the minister to respond. It's not productive.

**Hon Mr Leach:** That's good advice. He might learn something if he listened. As I said, we discussed this with the mayors. We pointed out all of the problems with a referendum. We advised the mayors of the problems in holding a referendum when you have so many questions that could be put on the ballot that there is no way possible to get a logical answer on a referendum ballot on this issue. The mayors know that. The mayors are out posturing. I think they're taking some pretty irresponsible actions by reporting that they're going to spend millions of dollars of taxpayers' money on a referendum that will have no positive or useful results.

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Mrs Helen Johns (Huron):** My question is to the Attorney General. I understand that in London a family court judge has ruled that a family support plan recipient and her ex-husband should be allowed to opt out of the family support plan. Would you comment on this with specific reference to whether they should be able to opt out of the plan.

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** Thank you, to the member for Huron, for the question. It's inappropriate for me to speak about any individual case, but I'm well aware that there are many responsible parents around Ontario who don't need the government to be looking over their shoulder in order to ensure that support payments are paid and received.

I couldn't agree more with the comment that the member made. That's why Bill 82, which was recently passed, permits people to opt out of the plan to avoid the government and to make their payments on their own. This would simplify things for responsible parents. It gets the government away from those who don't need the enforcement, and it frees up resources so that the Family Responsibility Office can do what it's intended to do, and that's track people down who aren't paying their family support.

**Mrs Johns:** Why did it take so long to bring this commonsense approach to family support between responsible parents?

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**Hon Mr Harnick:** It's always been my position that responsible parents don't need the government to look over their shoulders to ensure that they're living up to their family support responsibilities.

The member should know that when the previous government brought in its plan, the member for Oakville South and I argued strongly for an opting-out provision. We even provided an amendment to the bill that the former government wouldn't listen to. It was common sense then and it's common sense now that we allow people who are responsible to opt out of the plan.

We're also doing other commonsense things —

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The member for London Centre, I warn you. You must come to order. Minister?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** We're also in Bill 82 doing other things that are long overdue: suspending the driver's licence of those who don't pay, reporting people to credit bureaus, and also referring collection matters to private collectors so that we can in fact collect money for women and children.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** I direct my question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs again, give him the opportunity to answer some questions for a change. Yesterday we witnessed your coronation as emperor. You marched your forces of occupation into Metro Toronto and declared: "I'm in charge now, no questions asked. We're moving forward." What you did yesterday denied the people of Metro Toronto a basic democratic right: the right to have a say in how they are governed. You didn't consult. You didn't even give them fair warning.

At what point in the last election campaign did you suggest that you were going to force amalgamation on the people of Metro Toronto? What mandate do you have from the people of Metro to erase their local identities and impose a forced assimilation? What right do you have, Minister?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I answered that question earlier to the member for Oakwood. If the member wants to read the Common Sense Revolution and see the position that our government took on municipal governments, layers of government, overlap, waste, duplication, that we would do everything in our power to get rid of it —

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Leach:** Flip to page 17, to the member for Oakwood. I'll come over and read it for him if he would like, point it out to him if he has difficulty understanding the English language.

We pointed out on a number of occasions that we were going to eliminate waste and duplication and overlap of governments. We said there were too many governments, we said there were too many politicians, and there are.

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: The minister mentioned that the megacity legislation proposal was on page 17 in the blue book, the Common Sense Revolution. It is not there. Will he correct that?

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** No. You can correct your own record and on occasion you can even correct another member of your caucus's record, but you can't be allowed to correct other members' records.



**Mr Cordiano:** Minister, you can't go ahead with your forced amalgamation. You can't do it without consulting the people first. Act like a democratic leader instead of a dictator.

I ask the minister a very simple question: Will you support my private member's resolution calling for a referendum on this forced amalgamation? I've tabled that with the clerks right here in the Legislature. That's up for debate. I want to know: Will you support my private member's resolution calling for a referendum on this matter? Will you allow the people of Metro Toronto a say in how they're going to be governed?

**Hon Mr Leach:** Let me think about that for a minute. No.

#### DAY CARE

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** My question is to the Chair of Management Board. On numerous occasions, I've raised the issue of four school-based day care centres in Toronto that will be forced to close because your government refuses to provide the \$1.5 million in capital funding that's required.

I've got the commitment of the Minister of Community and Social Services twice now to meet with the parents. That meeting was scheduled for yesterday. It got cancelled at the last minute and they were told it was because the executive assistant wanted to go to a briefing on the megacity legislation. They're furious. They had to take time off work. They're angry, and rightly so.

The Toronto Board of Education has been told that Management Board and your government refuses to provide the \$1.5 million in capital funding and an alternative should be looked at. One of the parents was told by one of the minister's staff that they have had conversations with a commercial, for-profit operator who wants to move into those centres. In fact, she told them that many commercial, for-profit operators want to move into school-based centres. Is this your goal, your government's goal, Minister, to drive non-profit, parent-board centres out of business and hand them and public school building facilities over to your commercial, for-profit allies?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** I know representatives of the day care centres had a meeting arranged yesterday, I believe it was, with staff of the ministry involved, the Ministry of Community and Social Services, and unfortunately that meeting had to be cancelled.

I know that staff have met on at least one other occasion with the staff of one of the day care centres. Meetings are being arranged at this point and there is a willingness obviously to get together and to cooperate and to look at this matter. That's the forum in which it should be discussed and I'm quite confident those meetings will be arranged between the ministry and the representatives of the day care — the individual entities in the schools, and hopefully it'll be sorted out.

**Ms Lankin:** Minister, it can only get sorted out if you provide the capital funding, and your minister has already said no. As Chair of Management Board you took \$40

million in capital funds and converted them to 40 million so-called new dollars in operating funds and then boasted that your government was spending more than any other government. Then you put a freeze on that money and not a single cent has been spent nor will it be in this budget year. It would take \$1.4 million of that \$40 million to ensure the continuation of these four centres.

The minister has told us that Management Board and the government's policy is that you won't convert the money back to capital, and yet when it was politically convenient to you in your riding, you did just that. You approved \$380,000 for the construction of a new Red Apple Day Care Centre in Marc Garneau High School. We have the Metro school board report to verify this, and that it was not minor health and safety repairs, as the minister led people to believe; it was new construction, exactly like these four other centres.

Minister, you made it happen once. You did the right thing for Red Apple when it was in your riding. Do the right thing for these other four centres. Convert the \$1.4 million. Save these centres.

**Hon David Johnson:** It's been pointed out on many occasions that the greatest burden that's going to be passed along to our children, and which is going to hinder the future of the children of Ontario, is the debt that has been created under the government represented by the member opposite during the five years of their tenure, having increased the debt of the province of Ontario from some \$40 billion to \$100 billion. That is going to be the burden our children have to bear in the years ahead.

But I will say that this government has taken initiatives in terms of the day care community. This government has committed to spending up to \$600 million for child care. This government has budgeted \$37 million to provide special services for children with developmental disabilities. This government has looked at the day care services as a priority and is moving ahead. The ministry will be meeting with representatives of the four day care centres that are affected by this.

1450

#### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Mr Peter L. Preston (Brant-Haldimand):** My question is to the minister responsible for seniors. This province's \$1.2-billion drug benefit plan provides medications to more than two million people, more than half of whom are seniors. I'm told by pharmacists in my riding that the government is taking steps to bolster the plan with more medications. What can you tell me about this initiative?

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Seniors Issues]):** I'm pleased to inform members of the House and my colleague that effective tomorrow the Ontario government will be adding 97 new medications to the Ontario Drug Benefit Formulary. About half of these are going to be less expensive generic drugs which will reduce the overall cost of the program. This will allow us to reinvest those savings by adding 47 new single-source medications that have never before been on the formulary. We're pleased that this expansion is going to occur.



The previous two governments clawed back and removed drugs from the drug plan, causing out-of-pocket costs for seniors and social assistance recipients in this province. We have added 400 new drugs to the program. That's over 20 new drugs for each and every month we've been elected to office in Ontario. This is smart health care spending, this is reducing waste and duplication, and this reinvesting direct dollars into direct patient care in Ontario.

**Mr Preston:** The people of my riding are pleased to see the ODB formulary expanded. It will mean fewer out-of-pocket costs for them. But there are some seniors in my community still worried about the copayment costs and how expensive they could be since the federal government has decided that drugs aren't part of the Canada Health Act. How does the cost of our drug plan fare against those in other provinces?

**Hon Mr Jackson:** It is true that the drug plans in all the provinces are not covered under the Canada Health Act, but it is true also that Ontario was the last province to ask its seniors to participate in this insurance plan, the last province with a free drug plan. The previous two governments removed drugs from the plan. We have added new drugs to the plan. Low-income seniors in Ontario will be spending approximately, on average, \$4 a month, about \$48 a year, and this will provide them with ODB-listed drugs worth about \$753 a year. I want to compare that with other provinces. I want the members of the House to be aware that in British Columbia they are paying out of pocket, per senior, \$200, in Quebec \$277, in PEI \$356, in Saskatchewan \$540. In Ontario, \$4 a month sounds like a pretty good deal. Under the expanded Trillium program 140,000 working poor are receiving benefits and 400 new drugs have been added by this government, a record we're very proud of.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Members come to order.

**Interjection:** It was a good answer.

**The Speaker:** It may well have been a good answer, but it wasn't that good.

#### SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, I'm asking this question today on behalf of a very special little boy. Adam May is 32 months old, not yet three years old, and he is significantly speech-delayed. Sixteen months ago Adam's parents became concerned about his speech development. They contacted their doctor, who counselled them to watch and wait. Ten months ago Adam's doctor referred Adam for speech and language assessment. His parents were told that Adam would have to wait until December, a full 10 months, due to your budget cuts.

Finally, last Friday, Adam was assessed at the Mississauga General Hospital. The assessment confirmed that he is significantly speech-delayed and he's been placed on a priority waiting list for a speech pathologist. It was also recommended that Adam undergo a psychological test. The speech pathologist has told the May family that it may take six months more until treatment can even begin.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Question.

**Mrs Caplan:** I hope you'll agree that six months is too long for a fragile child like Adam to wait. He has been listed as a priority, he's at the most critical stage of his development in his young life and I'm asking you to make sure he doesn't have to wait six months more. Will you intervene —

**The Speaker:** Member for Oriole, thank you.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** In terms of the issue that's been put before me today, it's one every member of this House could say we would have the greatest of sympathy for and would do everything we could, and certainly I as Minister of Health will be interested to see the details of that particular case and follow through.

I am informed that the government has plans to introduce a speech and language pathology initiative, some \$10 million; the details are being worked out. How that may affect the case in question at this point in time I don't know, but I will say that I'm glad that the member for Oriole has brought this to attention and I look forward to receiving the details and pursuing it.

**Mrs Caplan:** Minister, Adam can't wait. Adam's father is in the gallery today and will be happy to share with you the specific details. He's left many, many messages with your ministry. Yesterday, he finally had a return phone call and your staff told Mr May to contact his district health council. He can do nothing but wait unless you help him, and such answers from your office, I would suggest to you, are unacceptable.

Despite the fact that the Mays have been told that Adam requires urgent attention, he will not even be seen by a psychologist until January 22, four months after a referral by his paediatrician. As I said before, it is critical for Adam's speech development that he see someone now and that he get attention now. The bottom line is that your government's cuts to hospitals have created this mess.

**The Speaker:** Question, please.

**Mrs Caplan:** We need you to intervene. I want you to know that Adam's father is here. He told me that he has never even heard Adam, who is not yet three years old, say "Daddy." On behalf of Adam's parents, I'm asking you to intervene in this extremely urgent case and help Adam —

**The Speaker:** Member for Oriole, thank you very much.

**Hon David Johnson:** I've indicated to the member for Oriole that I am certainly most interested to see the details that she has of this particular case and I'm sure that the staff of the Ministry of Health will be anxious to get those details and to pursue it.

This government is not satisfied with the health care program in total. We believe that the health care system needs to be improved. We've indicated that before we became government and since we've become government. We believe that the health care system needs to be improved. We've committed to protecting the health care budget, and indeed this year we have increased it, but certainly there's no question that individual cases come up and individual cases need to be pursued. I thank the member for Oriole for raising the issue today.



## APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I want to express my thanks to the Minister of Education and Training for returning so that I could put this question with regard to the discussion paper on apprentice reform which his ministry has released today. The consultation paper points out that the federal contribution to in-school training ends in 1999 and it puts forward five options. Four of those five involve offloading of these costs, either fully or partially, on to apprentices and/or their employers. Could the minister indicate if that's his intention and could he indicate what commitment there will be to the community colleges in terms of funding, considering the cost cutting and expenditure cuts that he is proposing and has already implemented in that area of post-secondary education?

1500

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** It's a pleasure to return to a question from the member opposite, the member for Algoma. I always enjoy his questions. We have released a discussion paper on apprenticeship today. As the member opposite might know —

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** Turn down the music, Speaker.

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** Please, Gilles, I want to return to the question; I want to have a chance to answer it.

As he said, we have a recent discussion paper. It's been 30 years since there have been significant changes to the apprenticeship program in Ontario. We think it's time to have a look at it. We have a discussion paper out. We want to talk to people who are involved in the apprenticeship program — employers, apprentices and other people who are concerned — about the future of this program.

There are funding changes coming over the next few years. We want to see who should pay — what is the fair share for an apprentice, what is the fair share for the private sector — and how can the province best support those trades. It's equally important that we work on the apprenticeship programs to make them more attractive to young people because there are fewer young people entering the trades now. I look forward to the responses to this paper and I'm glad that we're out there now looking for a better apprenticeship program for this province.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** No, I'm sorry. Question period ended.

## MOTIONS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** I move that notwithstanding standing order 96(a), the House will not meet to consider private members' public business on Thursday morning, December 19, 1996, and that notwithstanding standing order 96(h), the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot items 55, 56, 57, 58, 59 and 60.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I would just like to clarify on the record that this means that the House will not sit tomorrow morning.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Questions or comments? Further debate?

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Can we get an answer to that?

**The Speaker:** The answer is yes.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

## PETITIONS

### ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

**Mr Gilles E. Morin (Carleton East):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the right of Catholic ratepayers to govern Catholic education in Ontario is constitutionally protected in the British North America Act (1867) and the Constitution Act (1982); and

"Whereas the Minister of Education and Training is reviewing and considering a number of reforms to the education system in Ontario; and

"Whereas a number of these proposed reforms would have a serious negative impact on Catholic education;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We strongly urge that the Minister of Education and Training be requested to reaffirm the government's commitment to the maintenance of Roman Catholic denominational rights ensuring that any reforms will not lessen or abrogate any such rights;

"And further, that the minister enter into realistic and meaningful consultation with all education stakeholders that will lead to positive change for students."

I affix my signature.

### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Harris government has begun a process to open the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario;

"Whereas this act is the single most important piece of legislation for working people since it is designed to protect our lives, safety and health while at work and allow us to return home to our families in the same condition in which we left; and

"Whereas the government has made it clear that they intend to water down the act and weaken the rights of workers under the law, including the right to know, the right to participate and especially the right to refuse; and

"Whereas this government has already watered down proper training of certified committee members;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario not to alter the Occupational Health and Safety Act or erode the rights of workers any further and to ensure strict enforcement of the legislation."

I affix my name to the petition.



### CHARLOTTE ELEANOR ENGLEHART HOSPITAL

**Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton):** I have a petition with 12,000 names that reads as follows:

"We, the concerned citizens and taxpayers of rural Lambton county, object to the notice of intention to issue directions to Charlotte Eleanor Englehart Hospital by the Health Services Restructuring Commission and depriving us of a full-service hospital and taking away all our acute care beds. This places our lives at risk and denies us the same opportunity for health care as other citizens within the county.

"Our hospital must continue to provide rural primary care, including acute services and 24-hour emergency care, for our taxpayers and voters. We must maintain essential services in our community."

I'll affix my signature.

### FATHERS

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** I have a petition from Lloyd Gorling of Williamstown, who organized it and requested that I present it to the Legislative Assembly. It reads as follows:

"Whereas children need the unfettered presence, care and love of their fathers, and fathers want to have, care for and nurture their children after marriage breakdown as well as before; and

"Whereas marital separation is the end of the conjugal and financial relationship between a father and mother; and

"Whereas fathers experience misandry in the family courts of Ontario and other institutions which is depriving them of their children and subjugating them financially; and

"Whereas statutory recognition of these facts will reduce the burden of legal costs on families and the government, eliminate fatherlessness, cut down on self-destructive behaviour by separated fathers, reduce violence and produce healthier and happier children with a greater sense of belonging and commitment to society;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to pass legislation:

"To ensure that no father is deprived against his will of the opportunity to fully and completely parent his children regardless of the father's marital status (unless the father has put the children's welfare at risk and all available alternatives have been exhausted); and furthermore

"To ensure that no father who is willing to care for his child is required to pay for the cost of child care provided by his child's mother when the child is under her care and not his care (unless the father has put the child's welfare at risk and all available alternatives have been exhausted), in particular for the cost of food, clothing and shelter;

"To provide an apology to fathers and children separated by the misandry of the family law system."

It's signed by 157 constituents of my riding, S-D-G & East Grenville and Prescott and Russell.

### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Harris government has begun a process to open the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario; and

"Whereas this act is the single most important piece of legislation for working people since it is designed to protect our lives, safety and health while at work and allow us to return home to our families in the same condition in which we left; and

"Whereas the government has made it clear that they intend to water down the act and weaken the rights of workers under the law, including the right to know, the right to participate and especially the right to refuse; and

"Whereas this government has already watered down proper training of certified committee members;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario not to alter the Occupational Health and Safety Act or erode the rights of workers any further and ensure strict enforcement of the legislation."

That's signed by Larry Bishop, Gemma Mauro, John Degazio, Jane Palmer, Yvonne Ryan, Nora Gorges, Frances Albano and many others of Welland and area. I add my signature as a gesture of my support for this petition.

### SCHOOL PRAYERS

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** I have a petition to the Legislature of Ontario from the Grand Orange Lodge of Ontario West.

"Being a firm supporter of the public school system and the Protestant faith, herewith does the undersigned petition the government of Ontario to reinstate the Lord's Prayer in the public school system of Ontario."

There are over 2,000 signatures on this and I've affixed mine.

### EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** I have thousands of petitions and letters sent to me by students, parents, teachers and all concerned citizens, so many that they've been delivered to the Minister of Education in this Christmas bag. If I may —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Would you take your seat for a moment. We're in the middle of petitions and I can't hear a thing. Would the members come to order, please. That includes the member for Beaches-Woodbine. Thank you.

**Mr Gravelle:** My petition reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario," from the thousands of people in Thunder Bay:

"Whereas the Ministry of Education is discussing the education cutbacks in Ontario;

"Whereas the cuts made so far have already seriously affected our education system and further cuts will endanger essential services;

"Whereas cuts mean the threat of school closures, fewer cocurricular activities, more out-of-date textbooks, crowded classrooms, less special education, out-of-date technology, less funding for arts programs, fewer course options, fewer sports and overcrowded school buses;



"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to disallow any more cutbacks in the education system."

I'm proud to sign it as well.

1510

### WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** I have a petition here signed by a number of people from the community of Timmins, and it reads as follows:

"We, the following undersigned citizens, beg leave to petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the government of Ontario has plans to make changes to the Workers' Compensation Act which will have negative impact on workers; and

"Whereas the changes include reducing the payouts to 85% of earnings, eliminating various types of injuries and having employees apply for their employee benefits; and

"Whereas the WCB had a surplus of \$510 million in 1995; and

"Whereas in 1994 there was uncollected employer debt of \$173 million; and

"Whereas these problems within the WCB are not the fault of injured workers; and

"Whereas the recommendation to privatize will result in an increase of 13% in administration costs.

"Therefore, be it resolved that the government of Ontario stop its plan to privatize WCB and that the extensive provincial-wide hearings be held before any changes be made to the Workers' Compensation Board; and

I'm very much in support of this particular petition as it is an attack on injured workers and I think the government should definitely not proceed with this particular mode of attack against the Workers' Compensation Board.

### VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre):** I have a petition. It's not in the proper form, but there are more than 100 signatures. It concerns video lottery terminals in bars and hotels.

### NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health provided to the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to

North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I've affixed my signature.

### EDUCATION REFORM

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a petition signed by about 16 residents of the Toronto area. It's addressed to the government of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the proposed changes to secondary schools as outlined in Ontario Secondary Schools, the detailed discussion document, makes it easier for students to drop out; and

"Whereas the types of courses offered, as outlined in the discussion document, will not meet the needs of minority students; and

"Whereas there is too much emphasis placed on workplace education, as outlined in the discussion document; and

"Whereas, as outlined in the discussion document, students who are at risk of dropping out will continue to be at risk; and

"Whereas there is a lack of minority teachers to act as teacher advisers, as outlined in the discussion document; and

"Whereas there is reduced time for ESL courses, as well as English courses, as outlined in the discussion document; and

"Whereas the proposed anti-discrimination education, as outlined in the discussion document, is virtually meaningless;

"We, the undersigned, wish to express our great dismay and opposition to these proposed changes and urge the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training to reconsider these ill-advised changes to our education system."

I sign my name to the petition, as I support it.

### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mrs Helen Johns (Huron):** I have a petition from the people of Huron county, and as we all know, the government has not cut funding to health care but has reduced spending in the hospital area:

"To the Parliament of Ontario:

"Whereas the Honourable Jim Wilson, Minister of Health, has announced an 18% reduction to the health system which would result in major cuts to hospital services, reductions in medical-surgical beds, and possible closures of hospitals; and

"Whereas the future of the hospitals within Huron county is currently under review by the Huron-Perth District Health Council;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the citizens of Huron county realize that there are to be cuts and reductions to health care; and

"Whereas restructuring and financial responsibilities can be accomplished without direct hospital closures;

"Be it hereby resolved that the citizens of Huron county care about their hospitals and hereby implore the Honourable Jim Wilson, Minister of Health, to give every consideration to ensure that the reduction of health care not result in the closure of hospitals in the county."



## FIRE SAFETY

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This petition is in response to Bill 84.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the firefighters of Sudbury and Ontario are very concerned about Bill 84;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 is unfair;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 is discriminatory;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 endangers the wellbeing of the people of Ontario;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 requires extensive changes;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 needs broad provincial public hearings before implementation,

"We, the undersigned, therefore petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand the Solicitor General rewrite Bill 84 before being enacted into law and only after extensive public hearings across Ontario."

I affix my signature, as I agree with the petition.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads as follows.

"Whereas the Harris government has begun a process to open the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario;

"Whereas the act is the single most important piece of legislation for working people since it is designed to protect our lives, safety and health while at work and allow us to return home to our families in the same condition in which we left;

"Whereas the government has made it clear that they intend to water down the act and weaken the rights of workers under the law, including the right to know, the right to participate, and especially the right to refuse;

"Whereas this government has already watered down proper training of certified committee members,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario not to alter the Occupational Health and Safety Act or erode the rights of workers any further and ensure strict enforcement of the legislation."

This is signed by 18 residents in Welland-Thorold. I believe in it as well and I affix my signature to it.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Mr Laughren from the standing committee on government agencies presented the committee's 29th report.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Does the Chair wish to make a statement?

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** I've had a request by the member for Renfrew North to explain what this report is. It simply is a report. We met this morning and approved the appointment of a gentleman to the Licence Suspension Appeal Board, and I'm pleased to report that to the House.

**The Acting Speaker:** Pursuant to standing order 106(g)(11), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

1520

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

FIRE PROTECTION AND PREVENTION ACT, 1996  
LOI DE 1996 SUR LA PRÉVENTION  
ET LA PROTECTION CONTRE L'INCENDIE

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 84, An Act to promote Fire Prevention and Public Safety in Ontario and to amend and repeal certain other Acts relating to Fire Services / Projet de loi 84, Loi visant à promouvoir la prévention des incendies et la sécurité publique en Ontario et modifiant ou abrogeant certaines autres lois relatives aux services de lutte contre les incendies.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** The member for Oakville South.

**Mr Gary Carr (Oakville South):** I'd like to add a few comments on Bill 84, and I must say that I'm looking forward to some of the debate on this bill as we move forward into the intersession.

You will know that it has been almost 50 years, and some of the issues surrounding fire services are finally being dealt with. I'm under no illusions that a lot of these questions will be easy. In fact, we've had an opportunity to meet with some of the people involved in this and I'm sure there will be a tremendous amount of discussion.

I've listened with interest to some of the members and their concerns and discussions during some of the debates and I must say that I'm looking forward to some of the public hearings that will be —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Can I ask the members of the House to please come to order. I'm having trouble hearing the member. Thank you, and I won't single out the member for Beaches-Woodbine this time.

**Mr Carr:** It's been a rough week for the member.

I'm looking forward to a lot of the discussions over the intersession as we deal with this bill. I realize that over the last little while a lot of these issues have been discussed by all three parties, and we believe we brought something forward that will be in the best interests of the people of Ontario.

We know that most fire losses could have been avoided with greater fire prevention and public education over the last little while. Many of the reports that have been out dealing with it and many of the coroners' reports have dealt with these issues. So we're looking forward to a lot of these discussions over the next little while.

I would like to talk a little bit about some of the specifics of the bill. As you know, this act consolidates nine separate statutes: the Fire Departments Act, the Fire Marshals Act, the Hotel Fire Safety Act, the Firefighters Protection Act, 1993, the Lightning Rods Act, the Firefighters Exemption Act, and the Accidental Fires Act and Fire Accidents Act.

*Interjections.*



**Mr Carr:** For the people at home who may not be able to hear, some of the members are saying these aren't like my old speeches, and in fact some of the members will remember the old days with the rubber chickens and some of the other props. But it's a kinder and gentler Gary Carr. Like a lot of things, as I get a little bit older I guess I'm mellowing a little bit. In fact, Madam Speaker, you will know that even yesterday I had a chance for the first time in my six years to sit in the chair as Speaker. I've never had the chance to do that.

It is a pleasure to deal with this bill and to talk about some of the concerns that are out there over the next little while.

I want to right off the bat take a quick moment to thank all of the people involved in the ministry. I've had an opportunity to meet with the fire marshal and the coroner and many of the people in the policy and legal departments. We have spent a great deal of time dealing with this bill and I want to say that I've never had an opportunity to go through a bill in as much detail, having been the parliamentary assistant now in going through, and I realize the hard work and the dedication that went into putting forward this bill. I want to thank all the members of the ministry for their hard work and effort.

For example, some of the bills that are being changed here have not been touched in the last 50 years. There has been an extensive consultation over the last little while with the municipalities and some of the fire chiefs as well as the member for Mississauga South. So we are beginning the process of hearing from the people over the next little while.

We are talking about something that is fundamental to the people of this province in terms of fire safety. Some of the provisions that we will be introducing with this legislation will be mandatory fire prevention and public education. I think that's one area where all members of this House will be able to agree on what we are doing. There are many parts of the bill that members will agree with, there are some parts that they will point out that we should be changing, and I look forward to having some in-depth discussions.

I've had an opportunity to meet with some of the associations on a couple of occasions to go through it. They've been very helpful in presenting some of the concerns they have, and there are some valid concerns they've brought forward, I think, in a very forthright manner.

I'm sure all their members will know about the fact that some of the people involved in the leadership of the associations have been very forceful in putting their ideas forward. As I said to those folks when we met, I'm under no illusions that I have any of the final decisions on this piece of legislation. Cabinet makes the decisions. I can make recommendations, but ultimately the Solicitor General and the cabinet make the final decisions.

But I have enjoyed going through the process with both the staff and some of the associations, as well as some of the chiefs I've met. They brought some ideas forward. There are some things we agree with, some things we disagree with, but I think all members of this House and everyone involved in this bill will realize that what we're talking about is very profound for this

province because we are talking about lives being at stake.

We believe Bill 84 makes it easier for municipalities to arrange, for example, things like automatic aid efforts with their neighbours and neighbouring communities, and we are confident they will begin to work together to ensure public safety.

I want to touch on some of the major portions of the bill. The Public Fire Safety Council I think is one of the areas where there will be agreement from the members, and I trust the members will be very specific in the parts they do agree with because I believe there are some things where there will be consensus on some of the pieces of legislation.

One of the many welcome things that the proposed legislation does is give the Public Fire Safety Council legal status, which will enable it to attract some private sector partners for funding. This will expand the council's opportunities to provide public education to all Ontarians. Again, I think that's one area in terms of public education, and there may be other areas where we can't agree, but there is certainly a fundamental agreement in that regard between all members of this House and the people of the province.

The Public Fire Safety Council was established by the fire marshal in 1993 to raise public awareness and promote partnership with community groups as well as the private sector. We believe Bill 84 will enhance that. As you can see, the council's membership represents a wide variety of partners all working together towards the common goal of fire prevention and public safety. To date, the office of the fire marshal has been successful in raising funds for public education through the activities of this council, but what this will do is give legal status to the council.

There are many specific benefits in establishing the council as a distinct entity. For example, the changes will increase the profile of public safety in the community. Our public education fund will also be set up to develop and put in place province-wide public education programs that will be at no cost to the taxpayer. I think many people will see this as a good thing and one of the benefits of this bill.

We also believe there are some things that will be of benefit to isolated communities and to rural communities across this fine province of ours. Many Ontarians, as you know, live in rural areas that are very isolated because of geographic considerations and because of weather considerations, many parts of the north, and a lot of those people are asking how this bill will help people who live in those areas. I firmly believe this legislation will improve public safety for Ontario municipalities, including a lot of the rural communities and northern communities.

It provides for the first time unincorporated communities in the north with the authority they need for effective fire prevention and fire safety, and again that is an area I believe will be seen by the people of Ontario as being a good thing. In those areas the traditional focus on fire suppression has not and will not provide the necessary level of public safety. We believe this will assist that. This bill gives them the means to take advantage of



technology and place more emphasis on early warning systems and escape plans through effective prevention and public education.

I want to touch very briefly on automatic aid because I believe this is another important element of the bill. This is a concept allowing the closest fire station to respond to an emergency regardless of the municipal borders. During these challenging times, I think that will be again something that is going to be a benefit to the safety of the people of this province.

Automatic aid is a priority of this government. When lives are at stake, as we all know and everyone agrees on that, it shouldn't matter which fire department responds, and I think that has been a tradition in this province. It is something that has worked well. We believe and the ministry believes that there are a lot of things in this bill that will actually enhance that. We hope that there will be many comments regarding that section of the bill. We firmly believe, as I think all members and most of the public will, that whoever gets there and responds fast should be the one to respond, because in many communities, in many areas, as you know, the fire stations will be closer to one particular part of their municipal borders than others. If we believe that there may be some problems in the future, we also reserve the right and are prepared to act to ensure cooperation with neighbouring fire departments. That is happening now, but we believe it will actually be strengthened.

1530

I also would like to take this opportunity to recognize the contribution of the firefighters right across this fine province of ours in service delivery. I don't think any of us in our capacity as MPPs have not spent a great deal of time — in my own area of Oakville some of the people helping out on my son's hockey team are firefighters; we often debate some of the issues. I think it would be something that we agree on all across this province, that the firefighters have done a terrific job in this province.

Ontario's professional firefighters are among the finest in the country. I will even go out on a limb and say that they are the finest in the country, having demonstrated their commitment and dedication to fire protection and prevention for over 80 years. Firefighters play a huge role in our communities, not only ensuring safety, but as we all know, doing a tremendous amount of work within the community. I had the opportunity to represent the Solicitor General in the community in some of the programs that the firefighters have, everything from helping out with the hospitals to giving out some of the toys for kids at Christmas. As we all know, the firefighters across the province of Ontario have been an integral part of our community.

I will say this: There are some concerns by some of the associations, and we hope that during the public hearings there will be an opportunity to get some of those out, particularly some of the sections. Without putting words into the mouths of the associations, I think there are a lot of parts they agree with. There are some parts they have some concerns with. We're hoping to hear from them, particularly as it relates to some of the labour provisions.

I think I understand their positions now. I've had a bit of an opportunity to hear from them directly. I've heard

both sides of the issue, and in my own mind I'm attempting to formulate some of the things that I believe will be making this bill better, some of the things that can be added and some of the things that can be taken out. Again, at the end of the day it will be the government and the cabinet and the Solicitor General that make the final decisions, but I'm looking forward to that opportunity.

I must say also that I couldn't leave the whole issue of fire services without talking about the volunteers. I believe that over the course of the last years it has been the volunteers who in many areas have been of tremendous benefit to this province. Approximately 18,000 of the 26,000 firefighters in this province are volunteers, and we are hoping that there will be some participation by the people involved in volunteer firefighting to talk about the things they like about the bill, and if there are any concerns, obviously to voice those concerns as well. They represent approximately — this figure is outstanding when you think about it — \$1 billion in assets in the province, and we intend to ensure that the volunteer system is supported and enhanced with this bill. We believe it does that and we're hoping that the opportunity to hear from the people of the province will also confirm that. Through restructuring, volunteers will have better access to training programs and facilities. Again, I think this is one area that all members can agree on.

I want to touch briefly on some of the labour relations, because these will be some of the most contentious parts for some of the associations. Obviously, we're going to be listening and looking at some of the concerns that have been put forward. Many members have already had the opportunity of meeting with some of the firefighters who have come into their community constituency offices and put some ideas forward. I am confident that once we have had an opportunity to look at it, and when we've got an opportunity to look at the package as a whole, they will appreciate that these changes are fair and reasonable and will ensure public safety. That's our hope and our intention, and it remains to be seen, but I certainly will say I'm looking forward to that process.

The changes will bring fire services more in line with some of the other changes in labour legislation. As you know, this government has made major changes in the area of labour legislation over the 18 months we've been in office. This attempts to bring it more in line. I think everyone agrees that the key is fire safety. There will be those who will argue that some of the labour provisions will not help in that area. I must say that I'm looking forward to hearing from many people across this great province of ours and I suspect we may even have an opportunity at some point to travel on this bill and hear from other communities as well.

With this bill the intention of the government is to ensure people's skills and talents can be arranged and managed in a way to better serve the public. That itself will improve public and fire safety as well as the safety for firefighters. There will, though, be a lot of changes, and obviously even some of the circumstances surrounding municipalities are going to mean major change for fire services. The bill introduced yesterday changing Toronto will have a profound effect because we now will



not have all the fire services; we'll have one fire service. I think it would be an understatement to say that there will be many changes in the fire services in this province. It is the government's intention to try and do it with the interests and the safety of the people of the province at the utmost, but that isn't to say that there won't be a tremendous amount of concern out there through the municipal restructuring.

I suspect, and I guess this is another understatement, that a lot of the changes with the municipalities won't be just in Toronto. There will be many changes with municipalities across this province. When you affect municipalities, you affect the firefighting services many of the associations are right to try and work and ensure. What this bill attempts to do is set the framework for fire services in the province. It then will be changed as the municipalities restructure, as they go through that process, and I'm under no illusion that it will be an easy process. It will be difficult. There's a lot of anxiety and concern out there, and it's not just with the firefighters. There is in other areas: education and health care. But the one thing the firefighters out there need to realize is that Bill 84 is attempted to be done in the context of providing fire safety.

We hope to hear some of the good things that are in this bill. We hope to hear some of the things that may need to be changed. At the end of the day, the government will take all that information and make the decisions that it believes are necessary.

I'd like to take just a quick minute, in concluding, to close by reiterating that this government's commitment to public safety is the real key to fire protection and prevention with regard to this bill. This legislation sets the foundation for safer jurisdictions by ensuring that fire prevention and safety education, balanced with an appropriate level of fire suppression, are priorities in every part of this province. I'm confident that all members of the fire services as well as the general public, as well as the municipalities, will work together to create safer communities in all of Ontario. The safety of the people of this province is, again, all of the major concerns that we believe —

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please. The member for Grey-Owen Sound, you're on the wrong side of the House.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** I'd like to ask the members to come to order, please. Go ahead.

**Mr Carr:** What actually is twiggging my memory is that the members are speaking again a little bit about some of my performances in the House. I wasn't laughing at them; I was actually smiling at some of the performances. I just twigged to one which we won't get into here today. I think it was right around Christmastime that that particular event took place. But we'll get back to Bill 84 and save that one for off the air, particularly since my mother may be watching today and maybe wouldn't want that one to be brought forward.

In conclusion, I will say that I'm looking forward to taking this bill forward. It is going to be a good experience for myself to hear from people, from all members.

I'm going to particularly look forward to working back and forth with the members of the ministry and their staffs in making some of the changes that need to be made on this and going through the whole process. It will be tedious, but I must say that I believe that's part of the process that will make the bill a better bill. At the end of the day we all need to believe, and firmly believe, in what we are doing, and what this bill will do is to attempt to enhance fire safety.

1540

In conclusion, I am pleased to talk on this bill a little bit. I'm going to reserve some of my comments to respond to the various questions that will come forward. But I say to the people of the province, we're looking forward to it and hopefully all members are looking forward to hearing from Ontario on Bill 84.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** It's a pleasure for me to reply to the speech of the kinder and gentler member for Oakville South. It was interesting to me that he made an observation, albeit true, but that he would say it. I think I'm paraphrasing, but early on his comments he said, "There will be some changes to this bill," and something to the effect that, "I know I won't have much input into that because the cabinet makes the decisions."

That's part of the problem we have, and I'm sure many of the backbenchers have, with this government, that they don't consult those that they should, particularly the backbenchers. I'm sure, for example, the megabill that's before us and the effect that it will have on firefighters is not something that the members opposite in the government side have been consulted with to any great degree.

Of course, we know why that is, because not only will they not listen to their own members, they won't even listen to the people who are affected. To the 2.5 million people who are going to have an amalgamation, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has said: "It doesn't matter what the people say. It doesn't matter if they rise up. It doesn't matter if the municipalities hold a referendum. We're not going to listen. This is going to be done."

They've taken away the powers of municipal councils. When the municipal councils in the next year or so want to deal with their firefighters, they'll be hampered because some unelected, unaccountable trustees will be in their place making decisions that in a normal democracy — not a dictatorship like we're going to have — would represent the people and would be accountable to them.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** I'm pleased to respond to the member for Oakville South. I wanted to indicate that there are many parts of this bill in fact that we could be supportive of, if he would move to take out the very contentious issues, issues that the professional firefighters are so concerned about, issues that they have time and time again said that your government has broken its promise to them on with respect to appropriate consultation.

While we will be going out to committee, and I'm sure we'll be hearing from firefighters, we could have a much more constructive debate if those sections were removed. They've made very clear the areas that you promised to



consult on that you haven't and that you've included in this bill; for example, the new definition of "employer," which invites the privatization of fire departments, or the new definition of "firefighter," which will inevitably lead to less-qualified part-time firefighters.

Section 52 eliminates firefighters' long-standing right to negotiate their hours of work. It also has the potential to limit or roll back firefighters' pension benefits. We believe, along with them, that this section is regressive and that it sets labour relations back decades in that sector. Also, the bargaining unit exclusions are open-ended, they're ambiguous and far exceed anything that had been discussed previously.

Again, you're very clearly on the record in terms of your commitment to consult with this group, and they've made it very clear that you haven't lived up to that. While some of the measures with respect to fire protection and fire prevention are positive steps that have come through a period of review under two governments now and are finally moving forward to being able to be put into legislation, and virtually everyone would find some agreement around those, you have yet again moved with an anti-worker agenda against professional firefighters, who are amazed that this government would treat them in that way and have created a controversy around a bill which otherwise could be good public policy that we could all support.

I urge you just to withdraw those sections and we could see a much speedier passage of this bill.

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I appreciated very much the member from Oakville's comments with regard to volunteers. In my constituency, where the vast majority of firefighting is done by those men and women who are involved in the various volunteer fire departments, it is well known and well appreciated. This summer, for example, I recall being at the Billings fire department's 20th anniversary in Billings township at my own home town of Kagawong and seeing many community members out to help the firefighters celebrate the hard work of the volunteers and to celebrate their 20 years of service.

Having said that, and seeing the Minister of Natural Resources and Minister of Northern Development here, one of the great concerns we're hearing through much of my constituency, and it's coming from the volunteers, as they see the downloading of forest firefighting responsibilities to municipalities and see that volunteers may very well be out there fighting forest fires in their unorganized townships, in particular we are very concerned that the government's actions are not the same as the government's words and that we will be putting people at risk in the volunteer service to do things that they are not perhaps trained to do, nor have the proper equipment to do.

I've heard that expressed even by the Elliott Lake firefighters, who operate with both professional firefighters and volunteers. They have the equivalent of about nine townships in that particular city, and it seems to me that some of the things that are happening with the Ministry of Natural Resources are going to put tremendous pressure on volunteer services. I would just like to bring that to the attention of the parliamentary assistant.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions or comments? The member for Welland-Thorold.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate being recognized and having the chance to comment. It's interesting because the member from out around Oakville South presents this, oh, so sotto voce, and it was commented on during the course of his presentation. He's trying to make it seem so benign, as if it's but more of the fine-tuning that this government has abused institutions and communities and the people of Ontario with.

Once again, this government is trying to suck and blow at the same time. They're trying to leave the firefighters with the impression that, oh, yes, they're the friend of the firefighter. Are you kidding? Folks in Welland-Thorold, the firefighters from the Niagara region, know when they are getting the shaft, and they are getting the shaft. This is an attack on collective bargaining rights of professional firefighters. It's an expression of disdain for the professionalism and commitment that women and men in firefighting forces across the province have to their profession.

It's an insult and a betrayal of those same firefighters across Ontario who were promised — and yes, the ubiquitous video camera was present there too. They videotaped Mike Harris, as he was then, before he was the Premier of Ontario, promising that there would be consultation with those very same people with whom he was speaking and their membership before stuff like this was brought forward.

Firefighters were lied to. We know that. There's no question about that. This government holds them in disdain. We know that. There's no question about that. Firefighters have been betrayed by a government that, when they were mere candidates, made promises that they're now not prepared to keep. Firefighters know better and this bill should be withdrawn.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. The member for Oakville South.

**Mr Carr:** I'll comment very briefly on the comments made by the members. First of all, to the member for Essex South, that is not what I was saying about not having a voice. Those who know me will know that I'm very strong, probably even to a fault, in voicing my opinion. I shouldn't say this, because the Solicitor General isn't here, but I also obviously have a very good working relationship with the Solicitor General in bringing ideas forward.

What I did say is that at the end of the day the government will make the decisions on what they feel is necessary, but I am going to be prepared to bring it forward.

**1550**

The member for Beaches-Woodbine is 100% correct that the labour issues are the most difficult, part IX. I've spent some time and I want to tell the member for Welland-Thorold that the associations have been very clear with me. They've been very polite but they have been as forceful as they can be in terms of bringing their ideas forward.

I've attempted with this bill, which I sometimes haven't often done in the past, to hear what they're saying and hear what the ministry is saying. I've gone



through all the sections and I think I understand very clearly. That isn't going to make it any easier, because the member for Beaches-Woodbine is 100% correct in that this is the contentious part of the issues. The concerns she's bringing forward are exactly what they've said to me in our discussions. They've been very forceful and polite but they have said, "These are the sections, here's the problems we've got," and they've gone through them. I've attempted to go back to the ministry and speak with those people so we can have some idea.

The member for Welland-Thorold is 100% correct: At the end of this process we're going to be able to say, "Here's what we've come up with." We've gone through the issues, and by the time we're done I firmly believe I'm going to understand and appreciate them and I've taken a great deal of time to try to see it from their standpoint. When I've sat with them I've tried to see it from the other side and it has been a good experience. What we're going to end up with we won't be able to tell at this time, but I've said to them, "Be very proactive, put the amendments forward and hopefully we'll have a better bill at the end of the day."

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** I challenge the member for Oakville South to delete part IX of the bill and I think you could probably get this bill passed today. If you delete the labour relations portions of this bill, which is what all the concern by the firefighters and the other groups out there is about, I'm quite sure you can get this bill passed, because the rest of the bill, most of it, makes eminent good sense as far as setting up the fire safety council and the automatic aid provisions are concerned. I'm sure you won't be doing that, because if you did, you'd be making everybody quite happy. The firefighters are very concerned about these provisions of the bill.

I suppose the particular one that really concerns them is section 42, a very simple section which simply states, "No firefighter shall strike and no employer of firefighters shall lock them out." Since this bill was first introduced in the House I've had an opportunity to speak to at least a dozen firefighters or so, have met with the association in my own home community, and I can tell you there's no section that aggravates firefighters more than this one. They will point out that in Ontario we have not had a strike by a fire department for at least 50 years. I think the last one goes back to something like 1945 or 1946.

These are professional people we're talking about who are interested in protecting their community to the best of their abilities, and they find it an affront to have a section put into an act that is totally unnecessary, since they have already stated so in the constitution of both fire association organizations in Ontario. Both organizations specifically state therein that they believe they shall never strike and that they shouldn't strike and that the individual fire departments and fire associations in each community shouldn't strike.

Why is it necessary to put it into legislation? I think it's an attack on their professionalism, and they find it's an affront on the professionalism they're all subject to and feel very responsible for.

The interesting thing about this bill, and this deals with general municipal issues as well, is the fact that people who live in our individual communities see certain services for which they pay taxes much more than I suppose some of the unseen services. One of the services they all can relate to is the fire service they get in their municipalities. I dare say that most people, the vast majority, are extremely well pleased with the fire protection service they get throughout this province.

I can tell you from my own experience, when I was involved municipally in my own community, that I can't remember ever having one complaint about our fire department or their lack of response to a particular fire situation, and it really speaks to the professionalism of the people who are involved in fire protection services.

When you take a service like that away from people or when you start to change the basic ingredients of that service or when you start, in effect, taking away some rights those people have who are giving that service to a community, then all of a sudden people feel uneasy about it. Certainly the fire associations in each community feel very uncertain about this. Why there would be, for example, a section in the labour relations part that deals with their hours of work and the way the platoons and various shifts can be set up is absolutely beyond me, especially coming from a government that believes in the bargaining and negotiating process that takes place between employer and employee, perhaps much more so than other groups. Why it would be necessary to specifically set out work hours and the criteria under which the platoon systems can be set up is absolutely beyond me.

Why not leave it up to each community, to each municipal council, to negotiate these matters themselves with the different associations that operate in the communities? That's where these kind of discussions should take place. As we all know, no two communities are quite alike in this province. What may work in one community may not work in another community. To legislate this kind of detail is totally unnecessary. I think the firefighters feel it's a threat to them and I think that eventually it will lead not only to great dissatisfaction among the firefighters in our communities but also among the taxpayers and residents they serve.

The other thing that ties into this — and I'm glad that the member for Essex South mentioned the megacity concept we've heard a lot about in the last two days — that we've certainly heard from the fire chiefs about, is the proposal here in Toronto that they feel that a large, giant fire department that would serve the entire 2.3 million people in the larger Toronto area would simply not serve as well as the six fire departments that currently operate in each one of the cities.

What's very interesting about that is that there's a feeling around that the government cannot be trusted on these kinds of issues. We've already seen in the past that the Minister of Municipal Affairs has made promises to certain communities. He came to my own community, for example, on May 10 last year and said to 200 local politicians that he wanted one restructuring plan for the counties of Lennox and Addington, the county of Frontenac and the city of Kingston, and later on he accepted two completely separate restructuring plans after



one of the parties had walked away from the table. The people in my community feel betrayed that the Minister of Municipal Affairs did not live up to the word he gave in front of 200 people.

The same thing applies to the megacity bill. Here we have a bill which is going to affect the life of the city of Toronto probably for the next 50 years, and what do we have? The same government that says on one hand, "Yes, we believe in referenda, we believe that people should have a choice to express their views on particular issues of major magnitude," is in effect saying: "It doesn't matter. Even if the mayors of the six cities decide to hold their own particular referendum in their communities, we're not going to listen to them, because we think this issue is too important or too complex for the average person to understand," which is absolute nonsense.

**Mr Crozier:** What an insult.

**Mr Gerretsen:** It's a total insult, a complete insult to the intelligence of the people of Metropolitan Toronto, because the question can be very simply put: "Are you in favour of one city or six cities in Metropolitan Toronto?" That's the issue. That's the question. The minister has said in the House on a number of different occasions, "Well, you know, there are an awful lot of different issues that would have to be resolved, an awful lot of different questions that we may have to put that may be too difficult for people to understand." It is not difficult to understand at all. It boils down to: "Do you want one city in Metro Toronto or do you want the six cities to survive?"

There is a complete inconsistency by the government. They are saying on the one hand, "Yes, we like the concept of referenda," and on the other hand they're saying, "Yes, but not in this case." It seems to me that the only kinds of questions they want to ask in a referendum are ones they obviously agree with and that somehow will limit the role of government in the future.

1600

The other thing that is very much tied into this, and let's not make any bones about it, is the tax cut or the tax scheme. We all know that on January 1 of this coming year there will be a different instalment of the tax cut implemented so that we can reach that goal of 30% tax cut, I suppose by the end of next year.

**Mr Crozier:** So they can borrow that \$20 billion.

**Mr Gerretsen:** That's correct. They have to borrow \$20 billion to finance that tax cut, and this comes from a government that claims to be fiscally responsible. After all, they have stated throughout that they are in debt \$100 billion, which is costing us anywhere between 15% to 20% of all the revenues brought into the province on an annual basis to service the interest cost on that.

One of the biggest fallacies they have perpetrated on the people of Ontario is that none of that \$100-billion debt had anything to do with them. You and I, Madam Speaker, know it's different. You and I know that \$40 billion of the debt was incurred by the Conservative governments of Bill Davis back till 1985, about \$10 billion of the \$100 billion was as a result of the Liberal government that was in office from 1985 to 1990, and another \$50 billion was as a result of the New Democratic government that was in office during the 1990 to

1995 era. So this whole notion that the \$100 billion is, as they often say, a result of the 10-year mismanagement is a total fallacy because almost half of that was incurred by them.

What's very interesting, while I'm thinking and speaking about the Bill Davis years, is that of course those were the true Conservatives, the Progressive Conservatives, and it was during that period of time that we also took a look at this same act we're dealing with today. I was on a committee, as a matter of fact, that had on it various members from firefighters' associations, some chiefs of police and some people from the Solicitor General's department to look at exactly the same issues. Do you know that the conclusion that enlightened government came up with was not to do anything? They came to the conclusion, we collectively came to the conclusion, municipal leaders, firefighters, chiefs, civil servants, that there was absolutely nothing wrong with the existing act. Just because an act has not been amended for 50 years is no reason to amend the act if it has worked well.

I could go back to the example I gave about the strike situation. Why legislate that the firefighters can't strike when in fact they haven't struck in the last 50 years? It is just like waving a red flag.

I hope that this government, this Reform government we have, will be just as enlightened as the Conservative government of the early 1980s and say to itself: "We have a group of dedicated people out there who look after the fire protection services in this province in each one of our communities. They are highly regarded by the general public. Why do we try to upset these people?"

It almost seems that over the last year and a half there has been a succession of people that this government feels it has to take on, on an ongoing basis. We first of all started with the most vulnerable in our society. We cut back the welfare payments and the social assistance payments for people who needed it by 20%. That was followed by taking on the teachers, and that was followed by taking on our own government workers and the OPSEU strike earlier this year, and that was followed by the doctors.

What's interesting, of course, is that the only people who seemed to completely get their way in the long run were the doctors. The doctors, as a result of the deal that was signed with the government just a day or two ago, in effect are being given an extra \$150 million, and there's all sorts of speculation where that money will come from. Will it come from the hospital closings money or will it come from the extra user fees, which is of course the great concern we have on this side of the House, because we don't think there ought to be user fees in our health care system —

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener):** You're fearmongering.

**Mr Gerretsen:** No, I am not fearmongering.

**The Acting Speaker:** Could I ask the member to come back to debating Bill 84. I've been very lenient, but you are straying very far.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, it's all interrelated, it all ties in. I'll tell you how this connects to this bill. It is an attempt by the government to change the working



conditions of the firefighters, to allow the fire departments to be privatized, because as the member for Beaches-Woodbine so adequately pointed out earlier, "employer" is defined as not just a municipality but any person or organization that employs firefighters, and that could be a private organization.

I think, as one individual, that it would be a huge mistake if we now started talking about privatizing the essential services in our municipalities, such as fire protection. What's next? Police protection? They already started talking about that the other day. There were some inklings of that.

There are certain services in this province that people should always have the ability to rely on. They are the kinds of services that every one of us expects to get for our property tax dollars. Those basic services certainly include fire protection and police protection. I think that's the number one issue of the property taxpayer who's out there.

What the labour relations provisions of this bill are trying to do is to say in effect to the firefighters of this province: "We think you collectively are making too much money and we are now going to regulate some of the working conditions and some of the ways in which contracts can be reached with your associations through the municipalities" etc. One way to do that is by legislating the working conditions and the kinds of things that cannot be negotiated, as is pointed out in section 52, all in order to reduce the price of fire protection in our communities.

I think that's an unfair way to do it. I am a strong believer in the private negotiating and bargaining process. For a government to use legislative powers to make changes in the normal bargaining process that has taken place traditionally between the municipalities and the fire associations is the wrong way to go. I know you and I have met people who will tell you that firefighters make too much money, or this that or the other thing, that policemen make too much money or teachers make too much money. The problem is that we all have our own individual opinion on it, but all these contracts were by and large negotiated in good faith between the associations and the various levels of government or boards and commissions that have been involved in it.

If there is a feeling within a community that those people are making too much money, then instruct those negotiators, through your municipal councils etc, to try to negotiate better arrangements the next time around when the contract comes up. That is what the whole public bargaining process is all about.

But to use legislative means to deal with issues that have traditionally been the subject of negotiations between two equal partners in the negotiating process I do not agree with, and I've never agreed with that. That's probably the major objection I have to the labour relations sections of the bill, as it is for the associations. They feel that if governments want to bargain away some of these rights or want to bargain away some of the working conditions or hours of employment, the only way to do that in an adequate way is in one-to-one negotiations between the particular municipality and the firefighters involved, not through legislation.

It is all related to the tax cut, because we're talking about dollars and cents here. We all know that within the fire departments probably about 90% of the total costs are employment-related. If the government can step in and through threats and intimidation, through changes in the act, can change those working conditions, can change the level playing field, public dollars can be saved, or so they think. Those public dollars eventually all form part of the tax scheme.

You've got to remember that what this is really all about is that this government is determined to get out of the entire subsidy and grant system to municipalities. That's the underlying theory behind creating all these larger units. That's why all this amalgamation is taking place, not only here in Toronto but also in the Kingston area, in the Hamilton-Wentworth area, in the Lambton-Sarnia area. That's what it's all about. It's all about creating larger units so there will be larger assessment bases and it will be much easier to raise taxes to take the place of the subsidies and grants that will no longer be available to municipalities, and so the government can keep more of its own money and then play the part of the hero and say, "Here is your tax cut."

1610

Let me first of all say that I don't think there's a person in the world who wouldn't like to pay less tax than they are right now, but we have to balance that with the kind of services that are available, particularly for the more vulnerable in our society, as a result of the taxes we pay. I think there are many people who would be more willing to forgo the tax cut if they knew the services would still be available for the more vulnerable in our society.

You add that to the fact that in effect, according to the government's own figures, the public debt of this province will go up from \$100 billion in the year 1995 to \$120 billion by the year 1999, and if you also realize that during that period of time the total tax cut that will be given back to people by reduced payments is also \$20 billion, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that the \$20-billion tax cut equates to the \$20 billion that the government, according to its own figures, has to borrow between now and 1999.

The other thing that is of some concern — let me just get this section back — deals with the question of who can or should be part of the bargaining unit. As we know, the only people who are currently excluded, according to the Fire Departments Act, from the bargaining unit are the fire chief and the deputy chief. It's interesting that in subsection 41(2) of the bill it also excludes from the bargaining unit other persons exercising managerial functions.

What's interesting about this is that this is an attempt, not through negotiations but through legislation, to decrease the bargaining unit. I don't think that's fair. If there is a willingness or if a particular municipality feels there's a need to exclude certain people from the bargaining unit because of their managerial positions — I suppose we're basically talking about assistant deputy chiefs or people along that line — then let those municipalities negotiate and bargain with the firefighters in good faith to try to get that provision out of there. They may



succeed, they may not succeed, but in an open bargaining process in a free collective bargaining environment is how these kinds of issues ought to be resolved, and not through legislation.

It's very interesting that this whole bill is sugar-coated with sections that deal with, as I stated earlier, the setting up of fire safety councils or giving them some legitimacy and also the automatic aid provisions with other communities, as the member for Oakville South has already stated, that have been taking place anyway. I know of no situation where a fire department doesn't have an aid agreement with the municipality next door so that if a fire happens close to the borderline those firefighters simply go there and fight that particular fire. Now there may be certain financial contributions that may have to be paid by one municipality to another, depending how often it happens during a particular period of time, but as he so correctly stated in his earlier speech, those provisions are already happening because firefighters are extremely dedicated individuals. When they realize somebody's life is at risk or somebody's property is at risk, they just go out and do the job. I think that's why they're held in such high regard in Ontario.

There are all sorts of sections in the act that deal with basically allowing to take place those situations that are already taking place. It's sugar-coating a situation that quite frankly didn't need to be dealt with because it's already happening.

I would urge the government to first of all hold public hearings. I understand now from what the parliamentary assistant has said here today and certainly from what the Solicitor General has stated earlier that there will be public hearings on this. I can assure you that when those hearings take place, you will get the views of the different fire associations throughout the province. They have certainly made their position clear not only in personal visits with myself and other members of our caucus and I'm sure the other caucuses as well, but also in the numerous letters that we've received from individuals.

I don't know what the experience has been of other members, but what I find interesting about those letters is that most of them are not form letters. They are individually handwritten. They all make a different point, but they all point out that the people of Ontario are extremely worried that legislation in this area will cost the good relationship that exists between municipalities and the firefighters and the province of Ontario in a traditional sense, that this good relationship will break down.

We will see during those public hearings how the firefighters feel about these changes, and I can assure you that they would agree with my statement that if you take the labour relations part out of this bill, as I have challenged the parliamentary assistant to do today, in effect they will have no problem with the rest of the bill and would pass it quite handily.

I would once again like to reiterate that what this is really all about is that there's a feeling within the government, and it's never stated in so many words but it comes through in legislative piece after legislative piece that they've introduced here over the last 18 months or so, that basically the public sector in Ontario is simply

making too much money and that one way to deal with it is by bringing in individual acts dealing with certain groups of individuals and workers and somehow taking away some of the bargaining rights or the bargaining positions that they have succeeded in during the negotiations, unilaterally taking them away.

I think most people in Ontario find this offensive. I think it goes against the whole method of collective bargaining. It goes against the whole spirit and principle that has served us extremely well in this province over the last number of years. No one likes to be dealt with in an arbitrary fashion.

I can well understand how the people in Metro Toronto, particularly the caucus members, my own caucus members and those of the New Democratic Party who are from Metro Toronto, as well as others, feel extremely upset over the fact that in this whole megacity question, basically what's happening is that the same government that brought forth the discussion papers — I believe there's a committee meeting right now, as a matter of fact, dealing with the whole question of referendum — is in effect saying, "When it comes to the megacity situation, we do not want a referendum."

I think the ultimate insult was paid by the Minister of Municipal Affairs today when in effect he said that even if a referendum were held, it wouldn't make any difference to his position at all. That sounds very arrogant to me, as I'm sure it does to the majority of people in Ontario. If you are going to have referenda and if you are a true believer in the referendum concept — I'm not saying I necessarily believe referendums are the answer, but they are the government that is saying yes, we should have referendums. If you're a true believer in that notion and that concept, then certainly such an important issue as whether there should be one city here in Toronto or whether there should be six different municipalities is something the people of this area should have a direct say in.

I think most of us will agree that what this is really all about is the quality of life and the standard of living that we enjoy here in the province of Ontario. I find it very interesting that here the United Nations for two years in a row has said that Canada is the best country to live in from a standard-of-living and a quality-of-life viewpoint, and I think it's fair to say that good government programs at all levels, municipal, provincial or federal government, which haven't been initiated just in the last five or 10 years but which we've built a tradition on over the last 30 or 40 years at all levels, are an integral part of the quality of life that we enjoy here.

1620

If we get away from that, if we somehow say, "Let's just get rid of government completely" — and I agree sometimes perhaps this is a feeling shared by all of us, that Big Brother is watching us too much; "Let's just get rid of them." We only feel that way if we don't have any particular need for government at that time. The moment we need some of their services, whether they're educational, health services, fire services or police services, we are the first people to say, "We want those services" to protect our quality of life. That's really what it's about.



For a government to be as arrogant as that, to in effect say, "We don't care what the people of a particular area want or express by way of a referendum, we really don't care about their opinion, we've made up our minds that there's going to be one municipality rather than the six existing municipalities," is the height of arrogance and really speaks to the whole quality of life that we enjoy in this province.

I would urge the member for Oakville South to withdraw part IX of the bill, and I think you can probably get agreement today that we would pass it. Will you do so?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Ed Doyle):** Questions or comments?

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** In the two minutes, I just wanted to reflect on the speech of the member for Kingston and The Islands. He pointed out quite clearly that the parliamentary assistant, the member for Oakville South, should go back and forcefully recommend to the minister that the labour relations section of this bill be taken out.

You have 2,000 firemen out on the front lawn saying that Mike Harris put himself on video and made a promise during the election campaign that he would consult with the firemen before he brought in legislation, and then we find out this is a broken promise.

The two sections in the bill — I heard the comment that there hasn't been a strike by the firefighters for more than 50 years. Why would they bring in a section that says the firemen won't have the right to strike? Just to anger the firefighters out there.

Hours of employment: They're saying, "Why don't we have the right to negotiate our hours of employment in the collective agreement?" What has angered a lot of the firemen who were out on the lawn a few weeks ago is that the collective bargaining process is being taken away from them and they're not having the right to be able to sit down and meet with the government as to why these sections are being brought in.

There are a number of other areas that I'm sure we're going to hear more debate on as the member for London Centre gets up and talks a little bit on more of the details from our particular party on the concerns out there. It's going to be interesting.

The member for Kingston and The Islands covered a lot of areas, saying, "Why go out and agitate a group of professional firefighters who say this was not necessary, it was a broken promise?" and all for the sake of giving a tax break. There's the matter of collecting that \$3 billion in taxes that they promised as a tax break to the wealthiest people in the province, and this is one of the ways of being able to rake back some of that money from the municipalities, and the firefighters are the ones whose pockets are being picked instead of giving them the right to continue collective bargaining as before.

**Mr Carr:** I just want to compliment the member for Kingston and The Islands on his comments. I've had the opportunity to spend some time on Bill 20 with the member and go across some of the province. I know he brings a great deal of experience from a municipal background, so I'm looking forward to him getting into some of the details on part IX, because, as you know,

there are some people, particularly on the municipal side, who are saying, "This is the power we need to go forward." I hadn't realized that he had also been a part of the committee that studied it, and during that period of time the decision was made to back off and not go forward.

I think the member would realize, and it's a bit of an understatement, that these times are a lot different. There will be many, many changes, and I alluded to them. In Toronto and other municipalities, the changes are going to be probably the most profound. Whether he agrees or disagrees — he probably disagrees a lot — the government of the day is going to carry it forward.

But in those circumstances, during this period, are some of the changes in the bill as a result of some of the municipal changes needed, or can his decision be that even during this period of time the municipalities don't need the flexibility? I'm looking forward to spending time, because he is somebody who has a great deal of experience in that area. I look forward to his comments, if not today, then maybe we can get some time if he gets a chance to be on that bill to see specifically, with his municipal experience — because there are many in municipalities who say it didn't go far enough, and we've got the associations that say it went too far. Our job is to try and find the balance.

Are there any parts of part IX that are acceptable? That will be the process we'll be going through. I will say this to the member for Kingston and The Islands: With his background as a former mayor and somebody well respected in this House, I'm looking forward to some of his comments on this particular piece of legislation.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** I'd just like to commend the member for Kingston and The Islands for his excellent presentation. He says it as it is. There's only the one section here that provides so much distress to our very competent, qualified and dedicated firefighters, and that's part IX.

If you look at section 2, the firefighters are very happy that now the municipalities have not only the opportunity but the mandate to ensure that there is a public education program. Certainly this past October during Fire Prevention Week I worked with the chief and the firefighters and we put together a fire safety brochure entitled A Family Decision. In it, the fire chief put a message; the firefighters put a message. We talked about the arson prevention program for children; we talked about the Learn Not to Burn program that is now going internationally. We talked about fire escape planning etc. We worked cooperatively and together. When I was on city council that's the same type of thing we tried to do with our firefighters and our police services board.

There are so many articles in part IX which are needless. I negotiated for I guess eight years against the firefighters. Never once did they ever threaten to go on strike. That provision is just not necessary. It's demeaning. It certainly shows a disdain or a lack of trust in firefighters. They've always acted only in their self-interest but also always for the good of the larger community. They never threatened job action or a strike.

I'm suggesting to you that you listen carefully to what the member said: Withdraw part IX. You'll understand



that firefighters would then agree that Bill 84 is a good piece of legislation.

**Mr Kormos:** I listened to the comments of the member for Kingston and The Islands. I was surprised to hear the Speaker chastise him at one point during his comments — and I suspect the Speaker might have been prompted by some of the members of the government backbench — the Speaker suggesting the member for Kingston and The Islands was off topic. Well, the member for Kingston and The Islands was putting this bill very much into the broader context and I think that was incredibly important.

He was talking about user fees, and yes, this bill very much opens the door. Bill 26 was the seminal piece of legislation and these are all the rest of the pieces of the puzzle that open the door for privatization and/or user fees for any number of services, including firefighting services. That's what I heard the member speaking about, and the Speaker chastised him. The Speaker had the nerve to suggest that somehow he wasn't on topic. I suggest the Speaker — and it wasn't you, sir — wasn't listening; either that or the Speaker was being unduly influenced by members of the government back bench.

You want to talk user fees? We've only just begun, because don't forget, municipal councils across this province are in their pre-election year. They're loath to impose user fees, yet the attack by this government on the fiscal base of municipalities is so profound. I tell you, the city council of Welland has imposed a user fee on dying. There is a \$10 user fee for dying, a new \$10 fee for a burial certificate. The councillors clearly recognized that they were compelled to do that, however distasteful, by the policies of this Harris government, which place working people, the poor, municipalities, home owners, young families, seniors, the sick, under direct attack. This bill is part and parcel of that same process.

I appreciate the comments and I'll appreciate more the comments by the member for London Centre, who is going to elaborate very much on not just part IX but the whole plethora of sections in the bill which indicate why it must be defeated.

1630

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Kingston and The Islands.

**Mr Gerretsen:** I would certainly like to thank the members for Cochrane North, Oakville South, Sudbury and Welland-Thorold for their comments. I too was surprised that the Speaker would not understand that, because that particular individual, when she acts as Speaker, usually has a broad understanding and sees the total interrelationship between all the various subjects. So I must admit I was somewhat surprised when she chastised me on not sticking to the subject, which I did and I always do.

I think the member for Oakville South once again used words in his retort, and I have a high respect for him, when he said that as a result of all the restructuring that's going on, municipalities need greater flexibility; those are kind of like buzz words — "greater flexibility." To me, it only means one thing.

**Mr Michael Brown:** Code.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Code words. Thank you very much. Code words; it's a lot better. To me it only means one thing, that he wants to give municipalities the greater right to privatize. I think there are certain basic services that a municipality ought to provide and that should not be privatized. I certainly think that fire services are one of those services. I would like to reiterate that from a property taxpayer's viewpoint, it always seemed to me that once you start messing around with the basic services the average person can see they're getting for their property tax dollars — I would include in those services fire protection, police protection, garbage pickup, road cleaning, park maintenance etc — people will very quickly say, "What am I getting for my service?"

I say to the government and the parliamentary assistant once again, do the right thing, withdraw part IX and we'll pass the bill probably tonight, if you so wish.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I'm glad I have an opportunity this afternoon to do my leadoff speech, which was of course pre-empted by my having to be in the justice committee looking at the family support plan at the time this bill was called. I hope people are sort of in for the long haul of 90 minutes while I go through some of the concerns we have with Bill 84.

One of the members of the official opposition in commenting on the speech from the member for Kingston and The Islands said that firefighters were really very happy about many aspects of the bill. I think it's important for people to really understand that, that many of the issues in the sections of the bill, not part IX but the other sections of the bill, are things that firefighters and fire chiefs have been asking for for a long time. They are tools they have felt they needed in order to be responsive to the growing changes in their work. They have been changes that they have been asking for, that inquests have asked for, that have been very important in terms of the ability of the people of Ontario to be sure we will have a level of safety with which we're comfortable.

But like many of the bills this government brings forward, this bill is highly tainted by some of the aspects and some of the confusions around it. It is my very strong hope that in the course of extensive public hearings on this bill, public hearings that have been asked for by fire chiefs, by the firefighters and by the general public, there will be an opportunity for the government to correct some of the very serious limitations in this bill. Those limitations do not solely pertain, although many of them are important to the area of labour relations, but there are other areas that need to be looked at very carefully and where clarification is needed.

It is really important that we recognize that the work that has gone on to look at a unified picture around fire safety has been going on for a long time, but I would suggest to you that the Crombie commission was quite wrong in determining that it wasn't necessary for it to consult with professional firefighters, with the fire chiefs, when they made their decisions around what they were going to recommend.

It's important that we understand that the recommendations of the Crombie commission, the who does what to whom commission, are very important in this respect



because the government informed us last week that this is one of the bills it defines to be in within the purview of the special session that has been called to start January 13.

The other thing we found out last week, and I think this will be of overwhelming interest to firefighters, and frankly to police officers as well, is that this government, when it goes out to hearings, wants not just this bill to be looked at. They want it to be looked at in conjunction with a bill that we have not yet seen on civilian oversight of the police.

That should give us all great concern because what it means is that this supposedly landmark piece of legislation is so unimportant to this government that it's prepared to look at it in conjunction with another piece of legislation that is equally engrossing to the population. However, this does not appear to be engrossing to the House: I note that there isn't a quorum in the House. Would you call a quorum?

**The Acting Speaker:** Would you check for a quorum, please.

**Senior Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Journals (Mr Alex D. McFedries):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Senior Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Journals:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Would you like to continue, please.

**Mrs Boyd:** Part of my concern is that although the Solicitor General, who brought forward this act, made great fanfare of the fact of its importance, he, the minister also responsible for policing in this province, appears to be willing to dilute the very important business of making sure that this act is right; with some of the admitted problems that the parliamentary assistant noted are there in the act, he seems to be trying to run those together with another piece of legislation which we have not yet seen.

Both those who are concerned about policing in this province and those who are concerned around all issues of public safety that are dealt with by our professional firefighters need to be very aware that this government does not consider these issues as important as they do. It will be important for us to be very vigilant to ensure that these issues get a thorough discussion.

When the minister gave his speech introducing this bill, one of the pieces of very good news that he had to tell us was that this piece of legislation was thoroughly endorsed by the fire chiefs throughout Ontario. It's extremely important for me to make it clear to the people in this House and those who are watching that many of the fire chiefs in the province have discussed many of the same problems that the professional firefighters' associations themselves have done. There is a really serious issue here of misrepresentation, it seems to me, when it is said that the fire chiefs are in favour of something. It leads to an adversarial relationship that need not exist and has not existed in the past, in most instances, between firefighters and fire chiefs.

1640

I mention that because I met this morning with representatives of the fire chiefs of the province, and there are

many issues about this bill and the implications of this bill which concern them quite deeply. They are very deeply worried that the minister's vision of them as being totally in favour of this act makes it much more difficult for them to bring forward the concerns they have.

Let me say that one of the concerns they have is the very definition of "minister" in this act. They are extremely worried about the definition in this act of the minister responsible for fire safety in this province: "'Minister' means, in each part of this act, the member of the executive council to whom the administration of this act, or of the part of this act, is assigned from time to time."

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member of the executive council who is responsible for this legislation should be here, and if he were, that might contribute to a quorum. I don't think there's a quorum present.

**The Acting Speaker:** Would you check to see if there is a quorum, please.

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Continue the debate.

**Mrs Boyd:** The fire chiefs are concerned because there has been some talk about switching fire safety to the responsibility of the Minister of Municipal Affairs. There is a real concern here, particularly when we see this put in conjunction with the whole issue of public safety and when we look at a bill that hands over responsibility for fire safety so completely to municipalities, that we be sure that there is someone who is not the Minister of Municipal Affairs who is responsible for all aspects of public safety, the enforcement of the law within this province. It is very important that we have a minister responsible in cabinet who knows all the aspects of public safety. The fire chiefs say that throughout, it talks about "the minister" in an anonymous way, it does not talk about the Solicitor General, and that is what they have been used to. It is really important for all of us to hear the fire chiefs. They are saying that it is essential in this province for the Solicitor General to continue to be the person who is ultimately responsible for fire safety, to whom the fire marshal reports, and to have that overview, an overview that will not be tainted by the influence of municipal councillors and municipalities, the way the Minister of Municipal Affairs often is.

That's particularly important when we look at what we have seen in this province in terms of the overwhelming influence of mayors and councils and human resource officers and chief executive or administrative officers, whatever they're called in the particular municipality, in the massive changes that have come forward under the who does what to whom panel. What we have seen is a complete shift of elected parliamentary responsibility in this province to an unelected, unaccountable group of people who have their own agenda, and that agenda is to gather into the municipal hands a great deal of power, a great deal of power that they exercise with a major, overwhelming prime directive, which is to provide the least government at the least cost.

The people of Ontario have to be very wary of that whole proposal when they look at their safety, and their safety not only from fire but from all the other forms of



disaster, all the other rescue issues that firefighters are responsible for providing in this province. I would say to the parliamentary assistant that I'm not sure he's thought of this aspect of the bill before. That's one of the problems of not consulting well with the professionals who deal in the field. It is extremely important, it seems to me, that we be very wary of any shift of responsibility to any minister who is not particularly responsible for public safety in the broadest sense, because otherwise other agendas take place that tend to overwhelm that as a prime directive, and it is really important that we keep that in mind.

Some of the other aspects that fire chiefs are generally concerned about include the whole issue of labour relations, and I'm going to talk about their concerns when I talk about the labour relations section, which you will understand is one of our major concerns about the bill as a whole. They have other concerns as well. I'll just start reading out some of those they have talked about.

First of all, they are very concerned about the change in atmosphere from what they have regarded as a consultative, cooperative field to a newly developing adversarial field. They are very clear that the existing legislation, the legislation this bill is intended to replace, has concentrated on agreement rather than disputes between the parties. The language of this bill assumes that there are going to be disputes and assumes that there are going to be disputes that cannot be handled in a cooperative way. It may not be surprising since the pressure to do this obviously has a lot to do with the pressure that the Minister of Municipal Affairs is bringing on this Legislature around the amalgamation of cities, because that will indeed have an enormous effect on the professional firefighters within the amalgamated area. The KPMG study is very clear that they expect to get a lot of the savings by firing firefighters. It is not surprising that the bill assumes that there are going to be a lot of disputes that there weren't before. It is designed, I would say, to facilitate the ability of municipalities to wring out of fire safety the dollars they will need because of reduced provincial grants. It seems to me that this is very clear.

Some of the other definitional issues in this bill are equally important. This bill sets up a deputy fire chief without defining what a deputy fire chief is. Is a deputy fire chief a firefighter who has managerial responsibilities? Is a deputy fire chief somehow entitled to take on some of the responsibilities of the chief when the chief is not available? There is no definition of a deputy fire chief and that is quite concerning to the chiefs of Ontario. They also say that the fire chief definition is not clear. It does not say whether or not a fire chief must be a firefighter. It is important for us to recognize that within the firefighting community there is a great concern that fire services be run by people who know what firefighting is all about, who know what is involved in all the multiple tasks that firefighters have to take on, and not some hotshot managers who don't know what firefighting is about and only know what they've learned in an MBA course. It's really important that this definition be rounded out if the government expects to get the support of the fire chiefs.

There's an interesting question raised by the fire chiefs. They wonder why "fire fighter," which always was two words in every other act, has suddenly become one word. I don't know the answer to that; perhaps the parliamentary assistant can tell us. People are asking: "Why this change? Why is it a single word? What's that all about? Does that mean that they've somehow changed because the word has changed?"

The last in the definitional clauses is that issue of the minister. The fire chiefs were certainly surprised to find that there was some equivocation about which minister would be responsible for fire services.

1650

The issue that is really of concern that is outside the Labour Relations Act is the issue of the fire code, and section 12, I believe it is, of the act is identified as being the section that is the fire code. What people expected to see in a bill that was said by the Solicitor General to incorporate all of the various fire acts into one place — the fire code under part IV of the bill, simply says:

"The minister may make regulations that are considered advisable or necessary for the purpose of establishing a fire code for Ontario governing fire safety standards for equipment, systems, buildings, structures, land and premises including regulations,

"(a) prescribing any method, matter or thing relating to fire protection;

"(b) respecting standards for reducing the risk of, or consequences of, a fire that would seriously endanger the health or safety of any person or the quality of the natural environment for any use that can be made of it;

"(c) requiring and regulating fire protection equipment and systems and respecting the maintenance of such equipment and systems;

"(d) requiring and regulating means of egress, fire separations, finish materials, furnishings and decorations, standards of housekeeping and heating, ventilation, air conditioning and incinerating equipment and systems;

"(e) controlling or prohibiting any material, substance, equipment..." It goes on. He "may" give regulations that establish this.

Now, what firefighters were expecting, because of all the work that's been done over the years on consultations, all the recommendations that have come out of inquests, was that this fire code section would set down what the fire code is and that there would be some improvements in the regulations in terms of the fire code, and that has not happened. That is a real worry to many people, because one of the issues that we have raised by the Solicitor General is that part of these changes were brought about by recommendations from inquests. But the act that we see in front of us ignores many of the recommendations that have come forward through inquests which have involved changes to the fire code itself. There is a great belief and a real concern that the fire code should have been either provided as a companion to this act so that we know what we're talking about in this act, or it should have been incorporated into the act.

Let me talk about some of the real concerns around the fire code.

Will the fire code be amended to require smoke alarms in all buildings that provide sleeping accommodation, like



single-family homes and duplexes? The recommendations of inquest after inquest, particularly into basement apartment fires, have said that should be a part of the fire code, but we don't see it here.

Will the fire code provide some direction to determine what is "adequate supervisory personnel" to carry out provisions of the required safety plan that's outlined in section 5.8 of the current fire code? This is a very serious question regarding nursing homes, senior citizens' retirement homes, group homes, senior citizens' satellite homes and possibly hospitals with the cuts to staffing levels that are happening now under the cuts from this government.

Sprinkler systems can be effective in providing more time to evacuate persons under care, but most of the buildings noted above are not equipped with sprinklers.

Adequate staffing levels are necessary to ensure emergency evacuation. How many staff were on duty at Meadowcroft? What part of that terrible tragedy could have been prevented by a fire code that set down adequate staffing levels when you are caring for bedridden people? This is a growing concern among people running establishments for care, and it's a growing concern among many of us who have relatives who reside in those areas. The tragedy that happened at Meadowcroft and the inquest that was held at Meadowcroft help us all to understand the importance of those issues.

How will the fire code, that presumably will be amended, address fire safety in hotels and motels? Remember, this act replaces the Hotel Fire Safety Act. One of the concerns we have is, what are the requirements under the fire code going to be with respect to these multiple temporary dwellings?

Will parts II, III and IX, the retrofit parts of the fire code, be changed to accord with some of the concerns that have been raised in inquests and in other places? I don't think so; we don't have any assurance of that. That's what the fire chiefs and the firefighters are saying: Without an adequate fire code to be a companion piece to this bill, it is an illusion.

Will the fire service have input into the changes to the hotel and motel sections of the fire code? There's been a lot of consultative work done, and there are draft changes apparently available, particularly on the retrofit section, but no one knows whether they're going to be consulted. If the history of this government in terms of actually consulting with people goes on the way it has been, there's not much hope that there will be.

The new act provides for qualifications for persons who work on fire safety systems and devices. That sounds very comforting to all of us, but who's going to qualify and who's going to be responsible to qualify them? We see the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations getting out of the business of licensing in these areas. Who's going to qualify people? The fire service has been asking for years to be the vehicle whereby people could be qualified for this, and it is important that it get some answers on that.

There are many, many areas of the fire code listed in here for which the minister may provide regulations, but we don't know what those regulations are going to be, and so when the minister goes out and sells this as an act

that ensures the safety of people in this province from fires and other disasters dealt with by firefighters, he has conveniently forgotten that many of those issues are central to the fire code and that we do not know what the intention is with respect to the fire code.

I would say to the parliamentary assistant that one of the best ways to make a consultation process in hearings most effective across the province would be to do some preliminary work around changes necessary to the fire code and some assurances to professional firefighters, and I would think actually to the general population, that those are going to accord with the kinds of changes that have been suggested by inquests, that the issue around first-response teams and the numbers of people on trucks, which is a very important issue in terms of labour relations, be included in the fire code. That terrible fire in Willowdale at Forest Lane, as well as the Meadowcroft fire — these are the inquests that we've seen most recently and the issues that have arisen in this area most recently — are places where the personnel available for the very first response, the staffing on that first-response truck, becomes an extremely important issue in terms of saving lives. It would be important for the minister to acknowledge that the act in and of itself, without some strengthening of the fire code, is not going to make at all clear the kinds of safety issues that he is trying to purport to support, because this is an act that only permits a fire code to be done.

The real concern here on the part of firefighters and fire chiefs is that with the kind of strength of municipal control of fire services that is given by this act and with a history where the fire marshal has tended to be reluctant to go against some of the strong representations by municipalities around the interpretation of the fire code, there is real concern about a watering down of public safety with the imperative of saving dollars. That's where some of the concern is coming from, that there will be a real ability on the part of those who are being given a great deal of control over this to really water down some of the things that we assume to be there as a base safety net, because they won't be enforced. That's a very important issue. An improved and toughened fire code needs to be the companion piece to this.

**1700**

The firefighters are concerned because they believe — and I think they're right — that there is not enough acknowledgement in this bill of the broad scope of the work that they do and enough acknowledgement of what their tasks are. Part of their concern is that most of us, when we think of fire safety and what firefighters do, think of an actual fire and what they do. But increasingly their work involves a lot of work around chemical spills, around car accidents, around rescues of various kinds. As we go through this, when we talk about firefighters we need to understand that firefighters do a great deal more than simply fight fires.

That brings me to the other issue. Firefighters are not unhappy to see the emphasis on fire prevention, to see that it is important for us to do public education, to build within our communities some community responsibility around the actions that all of us as individual citizens, all of us as tenants or homeowners, all of us who run



businesses, all of us who rent out premises, have around fire safety. They are very pleased to see so much emphasis on fire prevention in this bill, very happy, but they also want it to be known that they're a little insulted because the assumption seems to be that where there are professional firefighters somehow this hasn't already been done.

Most of us know that firefighters spend a good deal of their time doing fire prevention tasks, doing public education, doing work out in the community, alerting people to the dangers of fire. They feel very strongly that the provisions of this act assume that they will not necessarily be the people who will be doing that. That really concerns them a great deal, because they're the ones who have gone into classrooms. They know that when they tell of their firsthand experiences, that is one of the most impressive learning tools people can have. Talking about fire safety when you've never been in a fire or you've never had the training associated with some of the other tasks that firefighters have tends not to give you the kind of in-depth knowledge that impresses people who are sceptical about what you are suggesting in terms of protection.

One of the issues is that this public safety education, while it probably needs to be delivered in conjunction with other educators, like the schools, like our general public education through libraries and service clubs and all of the rest of that, must be done in conjunction with those who are professionals and understand the field. They are the ones who can give, if you like, blood and breath to the bare bones of the discussion around fire safety. They are very clear that they want to be part of that picture, and yet it's also clear from the act that they are not necessarily going to be part of that picture. They are not necessarily going to be seen as the obvious experts in the field. I'm not suggesting to you that every firefighter is a good educator. They would not suggest that to you either, but they would say to you that it is important to involve the fire services in that whole field, and that is not necessarily going to occur under this particular act.

One of the other issues we are concerned about in this bill is the lack of connection between occupational health and safety and this bill. When the minister stands up and says, "This brings together everything around fire safety in this province," he leaves out a very important part, and that is the whole issue of occupational health and safety as it relates to the kind of work that firefighters do. In September 1994, the Occupational Disease Panel of the Workers' Compensation Board released its report to the Workers' Compensation Board on cardiovascular disease and cancer among firefighters. When firefighters presented that report they asked for feedback on it and they expected that the recommendations of that panel and the importance of occupational health and safety would somehow be conjoined with any change in the fire act.

They had asked for that. They had written to the minister, they had presented him with a copy of this report and throughout 1995 and 1996 they have asked that the minister look at this in conjunction with any change to the act. The minister under our government felt that it was a very important part of the changes that

needed to be made, that there needed to be some connection, some reference to occupational health and safety concerns of firefighters in conjunction with changes to this act.

The recommendations from that panel were obviously very important. The panel recommended that brain cancer in firefighters be added to schedule 3 of the Workers' Compensation Act, meaning that the WCB must presume that a firefighter who has a brain cancer has been affected by work-related issues unless it is proven to be unrelated. The panel recommended that lymphatic and haematopoietic cancers in firefighters also be added to schedule 3 of the act. The panel found that there was a probable connection between firefighting and colon, bladder and kidney cancers. Guidelines developed and approved by the panel should be used for assessing those claims. The panel recommended that the WCB recognize firefighting as a risk factor for cardiovascular diseases, that the WCB should consider occupation as well as smoking, high blood pressure and family history when deciding cardiovascular disease claims for firefighters.

The firefighters look at what has happened with this government. They look at Bill 26, which brought about the interest arbitration changes which affected them. They look at Bill 26 and the kinds of powers that were placed in the hands of municipalities in that act. They look at this act that is in front of us today and they see that much is missing from this act that they have been asking to be incorporated into it and they know that a major shift is occurring in the Workers' Compensation Board on all of these issues around occupational disease and compensation for work-related injuries and illnesses. They look at Bill 86, which relieves municipalities of liability if something occurs as a result of a policy decision, in light of the kind of risk management mode that is being suggested by Bill 84 and by the kind of cost-cutting exercises indulged in by chief administrative officers within municipalities.

It all adds up to a picture which says to them, "We're being sold a bill of goods when the Solicitor General stands up and tells us that this government really cares about fire safety and this government really cares about the provision of these services within the community and this government is taking action that no other government has taken," and they're saying that's right because many of the issues that are arising are so complex and broad-based that they need to be looked at across the spectrum of bills that have been brought in by this government, and the implications of those bills need to be looked at in conjunction with Bill 84.

1710

They're very, very clear that they know this bill is not isolated for them, that they need to look at those other aspects and they need to bring to the attention of the people of Ontario what the cumulative effect of all these changes could be on their public safety. It could be quite frightening. It could be very frightening indeed.

Mr Speaker, I don't believe we have a quorum.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Would you please check if we have a quorum.

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees:** A quorum is not present, Speaker.



*The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for London Centre.

**Mrs Boyd:** When we look at the cumulative effect of all these various bills, we have to understand the firefighters' concern in that context. I would hope the parliamentary assistant would be doing that, because I think it is extremely important for us to know that those concerns are very deeply felt and that the firefighters will be bringing those forward in a very real way.

I want to go through the issue around part IX in more detail because I think it is probably the real focus of a lot of the concern that is there. I know there are those in the government who say: "Well, sure. The firefighters aren't concerned about public safety. They're only concerned about their own jobs." I want you to know that when you make that kind of comment, and we have heard many of you say that, it is taking away from the professionalism of firefighters, which they have demonstrated again and again across this province.

It is very urgent that we recognize that most of us are not knowledgeable and expert in the areas of risk where professional firefighters work all the time and that most of us don't have an appreciation of their concerns around this bill from the perspective of public service. It is incumbent upon us to recognize that this is a group of people who have never been adversarial in their relationship with their employers. They have operated under a regime that has required arbitration. They have been firm and they have been clear about what their expectations are, they have defended their members well, but they have not indulged in the kind of adversarial labour relations anticipated by this bill, and I would say encouraged by this bill.

Let's go through the issues under part IX. The first issue is that of the definition of "employer." All of the acts that are being combined into this act — certainly the Fire Departments Act has been based on the assumption that the major employer is going to be a municipality. That has been the way it was under the old act. They were the sole employers of fire fighters and they were the only ones authorized to operate fire departments. So the regulation of labour relations of firefighters employed in firefighting was organized under the Municipal Act. But in Bill 84 we suddenly see that the term "employer" includes not only a municipality but a "person or organization that employs firefighters." That's in subsection 41(1).

This clearly is the section that mirrors the provisional sections that were given to municipalities under Bill 26, and to others, that these services could be privatized. It raises the possibility that those who are currently employed as firefighters by private organizations could come under this act. There needs to be some clarification about that, whether those who are currently employed by the private sector in terms of firefighting do come under this act. That is an important issue for us to understand.

But the other issue is equally important, because we have in front of us the example of many jurisdictions in the United States which have privatized police services

and fire services. We know this government is very enamoured of our friends to the south, and because of their inherent dislike of anything that is public service and their belief that anything that is private can be offered in a more effective and efficient way, this is the permissive clause under which fire services could be privatized, privatized to whole communities.

Similarly, in Bill 26 that was the concern around policing services, that they could be privatized. We all have visions in our minds of those gated communities in the United States which charge their affluent residents high rates, in addition to whatever they pay in taxes, for private policing and fire protection.

I would have thought that in a province where we have built and developed both in the professional firefighter area and in the volunteer firefighting sector a system that is clearly based in a milieu of public service and one in which we have had wonderful service, never had a labour dispute that has affected the service of firefighting within our province, that we would be very leery of a situation that privatizes that and puts it into the adversarial labour relations area. That is not to say that it is necessarily an issue when something is privatized that it's going to be an adversarial relationship. What I am saying is that this opens up to the firefighters a glimpse of a vision of fire protection that certainly is not one they share.

The definition of "firefighter" under part IX is very interesting. Under the existing Fire Departments Act, the definition of "firefighter" is restricted to full-time firefighters who are assigned exclusively to fire protection or fire prevention duties, and it includes officers and technicians. In Bill 84, subsection 41(1) does not require that persons be assigned exclusively to providing fire protection services, which were defined in part I, but rather requires only that they be assigned to fire protection services. As well, there's no requirement that firefighters be full-time. In fact, the definition of "firefighter" includes both full- and part-time firefighters as long as they're employed regularly and on a salaried basis, as opposed to what we know with volunteer firefighters where they provide fire protection services either voluntarily or for a nominal consideration, honorarium, training and activity allowance.

Under this act, the cabinet has the power to pass regulations which determine what "regularly employed" means. What are the concerns about that? The concerns obviously are that the firefighters will find an increasing pressure to have a cohort of part-time firefighters available to deal with some of the other sections which involve the requirements at particular times of the day and night under a platoon system. What they are concerned about is that they may find themselves on the team with someone who is not regularly engaged in firefighting, who is not on the front lines and working as a team. We have to remember that teamwork is extraordinarily important in this work and that there is no requirement to provide those part-time firefighters with sufficient hours, and that they are not also having to engage in other work which may or may not affect their ability to keep up with all the changes in chemical issues that firefighters need to know, to maintain the kind of physi-



cal training and the kind of teamwork that is involved in fighting fires.

1720

That's a major concern and is something we really need to take seriously because they are basically saying they don't want to see the split that may occur between those who are part-time and full-time on a force and the kinds of controversies that can arise within a force that depends upon teamwork, that depends upon a certain solidarity and a certain focus of attention.

The exclusions issue is a very important issue. Under the existing act, the chief and the deputy chief are excluded from collective bargaining and representation by firefighters' associations. Bill 84 provides that persons who perform managerial functions or who are employed in a confidential capacity in matters relating to labour relations are deemed not to be firefighters for the purposes of part IX, subsection 41(2). This opens the door to a much wider exclusion of firefighters from representation and collective bargaining. It also leads, we believe, to disputes over whether a firefighter falls within the statutory exclusion and whether those disputes are to be determined by the Ontario Labour Relations Board, which now will have some powers over firefighters under this act but it doesn't specifically say that those disputes will be decided by the Labour Relations Act.

Bill 84 permits the employer, the municipality in most cases, to designate employees it considers to be managerial or confidential and therefore excluded in two ways, according to section 58. The first method provides that the employer identifies certain people, but this is subject to a challenge by the firefighters' association. It's left in that case to the labour relations board to determine whether the person does have managerial or confidential functions, and the board's decision applies in that case under subsections 58(1) and (2).

But the bill also allows the employer to designate a limited number of persons, depending upon the number of persons employed by the department, and that designation would not be subject to any review by the labour relations board. The bill also states that people who are designated in this way are conclusively deemed to be exercising managerial functions and can be identified by the employer in its sole discretion. That's subsection 58(3).

Some people might say that given the numbers that are there — if there are fewer than 25 firefighters, two persons may be designated; in a fire department that employs between 150 and 299, four people may be designated — "Well, is that such a big deal?" But the reality for firefighters is that they don't know and it will depend upon the exclusive decision-making of the employer, and it means you have an added number of managerial people.

It's very interesting that a government that is busy talking about delayering and taking the bureaucracy out of every other part of government services has created a situation where you're creating a managerial bureaucracy that has never been required before. It's very peculiar you would need to do that and very, very strange that there could be a significant effect, depending on the size of the department, on the number of people who are excluded

from representation. The impact of that on firefighters is hard to determine, but we do know that it certainly goes completely against what has traditionally been the way in which these departments have functioned.

We've talked a lot, and I'm not going to belabour the issue of no strike, no lockout, but if you think it is a simple thing, this is probably the thing that has raised people's anger the most. They never had any intention and have not struck before. Given the kind of mammoth changes that the Minister of Municipal Affairs is talking about in terms of municipal organization, they may be more worried about lockout than they ever were before, but it has never been necessary for them to have this provision. I think what it has done is to sour what was before a good working relationship between employers and employees by even suggesting that this should be in.

The bill says that everyone must bargain in good faith — that's good — and make every reasonable effort to effect a collective agreement, but the bill doesn't give any enforcement mechanisms with respect to this requirement and it doesn't give any enforcement mechanisms, I might say, to most of the other mandatory requirements under the bill, including that prohibition against strikes and lockouts.

Under the Labour Relations Act, the labour board is provided with the authority to hear and determine complaints concerning violations of that act, but the authority to do so is not specifically included in Bill 84. That's a real issue for firefighters, because the issue of bargaining in good faith from a labour relations perspective is probably one of the most important issues that needs to be adjudicated by an independent third party. They are very concerned that there is no cross-reference to the Labour Relations Act around bargaining in good faith in this act, and I think that is something you will hear as we go through hearings that is of great concern.

But probably the heart of a lot of the concerns is the hours-of-work issue, and the issue that hours of work and negotiations around hours of work are suddenly taken out of the hands of firefighters and their employers, taken away from the negotiating table where they have belonged, and the government decrees how work is to be organized and what hours of work are to be done in the province.

That is a very significant change and one that I think probably is most important for the government to look at, because the bill requires that no firefighter who is assigned to firefighting duties can be required to work or to be on duty for more than 48 hours in an average workweek. However, aside from this restriction and the requirement that firefighters be provided with a minimum period of 24 hours per week during which the firefighter is not at work or on duty, the scheduling would seem to be otherwise left up to the fire department itself.

That is a significant issue around the application of the hours-of-work provisions that are in current collective agreements, and that issue around what happens to current collective agreements I'll talk about in a moment. This bill includes no mechanism at all for a firefighter or a firefighters' association to challenge the improper assignment of working hours by the employer. So what we have here is, we take it off the negotiating table — it



no longer becomes a mutual agreement that takes into account the particular needs of the particular area, it suddenly becomes a total prerogative of the government to make these decisions — and then we see no mechanism for any kind of effort to deal with that if in fact there has been inappropriate assignment. Again there's no recourse when that is not being done properly.

Mr Speaker, I believe we again do not have a quorum.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please check.

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees:** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for London Centre.

**Mrs Boyd:** When you look at this whole issue around hours of work with respect to the call-in provisions that are subsections 43(9) and (10) of the act, you begin to understand where some of the concern comes from because this bill increases the employer's ability to call in firefighters in emergencies. Those powers have been quite substantially expanded.

1730

Under the existing provisions, firefighters who are off duty can be called in where there is a fire, flood or other disaster that requires the services of every full-time firefighter, so when there's a major disaster, all firefighters get recalled. That's under the current provisions. But this bill would allow the employer to call in off-duty firefighters as a result of, and this is not defined, "a major emergency" where the fire department needs the services of more firefighters and even if it does not require the services of all firefighters.

This needs to be really looked at in light of that definition of "firefighter" which includes part-time firefighters, because the bill would appear to allow the possibility of the employer having a staff of both full- and part-time firefighters, and it would allow stations to be staffed at different levels at different times of the day, and for someone to declare there's a major emergency when a regular fire happens at 4 o'clock in the morning, which is only too likely. What it means is that the employer then has the capacity to call firefighters in on a basis to meet emergency situations that quite frankly, if this bill which is purported to protect us were real, we would be protected from in the first place.

You're not going to get the kind of response that's required and that is precisely what the firefighters are saying. The reason this whole issue has been raised by the firefighters is that they see this and they see the pressure of municipalities to lower fire department budgets to a point that will endanger public safety, and this bill allowing them to do that and allowing them to use this mechanism by declaring a regular fire a major emergency and calling in firefighters instead of having them there and ready and able to first respond.

If you look at the inquest results of many of these issues, the first response is most important. People should be there and able to respond immediately. They shouldn't be called in on that kind of temporary basis. It is not a good public safety issue. It meets the needs of municipal-

ities that want to save money, that have to save money because this government has reduced their grants to such a point that they are going to have a hard time providing these services any other way, but the government ought to realize that when it tries to sell this bill as a total way of protecting the public, it falls far short of that billing.

*Interjections.*

**Mrs Boyd:** There are some issues around dismissal that are important. They're important to firefighters; they clearly aren't important for the member for Brant-Haldimand. He isn't worried about this, but I can tell you that firefighters are worried about the fact that this bill takes away their entitlement to a hearing before council, before their employer, before they are fired. It would deny a firefighter a hearing wherever that firefighter is covered by a collective agreement and is entitled to proceed to arbitration. It removes the right of probationary firefighters to any hearing before council if their employment is terminated. In place of that, the bill provides that a non-probationary firefighter who isn't covered by an arbitration provision in a collective agreement gets a review by anybody who happens to be appointed by the council, and we know that would likely be a chief administrative officer as opposed to an elected official. That's important to a lot of these folks.

The other issue is the probationary employees. Now we have under this act 12 months of employment: in that whole first 12 months a person can be fired without cause under this issue and a probationary firefighter does not have any right to an independent review under the bill but has to rely on whatever grievance procedure may be available under a collective agreement.

The bargaining rights of firefighters have always been, in the sort of regime of collective bargaining, fairly informal. It requires only that a majority of the full-time firefighters request the municipality to bargain with a committee of full-time firefighters. In other words, it has not been a formal labour relations issue.

The bill establishes a very formal regime, which is very unfamiliar to firefighters, for acquiring and terminating bargaining rights modelled on the Labour Relations Act. They now became a trade union. They've always been a professional association before; they now are forced, ironically by the government that's anti-trade union, to become a trade union and to be certified by the Labour Relations Board based on a vote on whether the majority of firefighters wish to be represented by the bargaining agent, and again the provisions of Bill 7 follow so that the vote can only be held where 40% or more have signed cards or otherwise demonstrated that they want to be represented.

That's not bad. They don't think that's a problem, except of course that it makes it far more formal and far more adversarial than it has ever been before. The proposed legislation does not contain any definition of what constitutes a trade union in this field. It's not clear whether firefighter associations that have represented their members for years and years and years would need to prove that they are trade unions under the Labour Relations Act before they can be certified to represent the members they have always represented, and there are none of the provisions that exist under the usual labour



relations regime to protect firefighters against unfair labour practices and successor right protections which are contained in the Labour Relations Act and apply to all other municipal employees.

This is extremely important, particularly at a time where we have the dramatic example of the megacity in front of us where there are going to be all sorts of issues around the transition to that for firefighters who have been organized under the six individual cities. There's no protection for them under this act and there's no surprise that the government wants this act in place when the Minister of Municipal Affairs' draconian act on the megacity takes place, comes in force, because this is of course what this is there to allow.

The certification and termination processes that are there are similar to other trade unions under the Labour Relations Act, and there is some provision under section 41 that the existing bargaining rights of firefighter associations will continue, unless they're explicitly terminated by the bill. However, the status of the existing collective agreements is not nearly as clear, and subsection 41(4) indicates that the bill does not explicitly provide for the current collective agreements to remain in effect when this bill comes into effect.

It does not provide that associations which have referred their collective agreement to arbitration and may be in front of an arbitrator can continue with that arbitration process, and the transition provisions between Bill 84 and the previous provisions are totally inadequate. My prediction is, unfortunately, that we will see a lot of disputes arising between employers who want to interpret this act in one way around the collective agreements that are there and employees who of course believe that would violate their rights. Those disputes, I think, the government wants to resist at all costs, and I think that would be wise.

1740

The other issue is that under the current Fire Departments Act, collective agreements would remain in effect until they are replaced by negotiated agreements or by the decision of interest arbitration boards. Under the current regime there is always a collective bargaining structure in place and an agreement that is in force. It only gets changed when an agreement is reached or an arbitration decision is reached.

The new bill requires that working conditions can't be altered, of course, once the notice to bargain has been given, until the right of the trade union to represent firefighters has been terminated. This would appear to protect and freeze working conditions during the negotiation and arbitration process. I believe that was probably the intention, but the wording of the bill is not very clear and the bill does not specifically freeze working conditions for those collective agreements that are currently being negotiated and that have been referred to arbitration. A freeze may only apply to a notice to bargain which has been given under the provisions of this bill itself.

Our concern is, what is going to apply in that transition period? What is going to happen to working conditions during this period of time? The concern of the firefighters, given the kind of financial pressure faced by the

municipalities, is obviously that their working conditions will be changed during that period of time.

The decertification process that's described in the bill ought to give pause. It is a normal process of decertification, nothing new to trade unionists, but it is totally new to the firefighting area. There has never been such a thing as a process of decertification with which firefighters or their employers have had to deal. So it is quite clear that even if the concerns and the issues that firefighters raise about the ability of their associations to keep on representing their members under this bill are resolved, the issue of decertification still arises.

What it means is that a firefighters' association may be decertified at specified times related to the expiry of the collective agreement where a petition is circulated among employees and submitted to the labour relations board and the petition indicates that not less than 40% of employees wish to terminate the bargaining rights. Then a vote will be conducted, and if 50% vote to terminate bargaining rights, the association no longer has the right to represent the employees and the collective agreement would be terminated.

What happens in those circumstances? Normally when you have that kind of situation, you have some kind of regime to say that until a new collective agreement is negotiated, the old collective agreement will pertain. But that's not in this bill, and that's a real concern because it raises the prospect, first of all, to put this group under the labour relations board. What you are asking for, quite frankly, are firefighters who may choose to be represented by the CAW or the Teamsters. You've allowed for that in a way that was never contemplated by the firefighters, but given the kind of attack that mainstream unions see themselves as being under, it may well become an alternative for them because of the balance-of-power issues that are being raised in the current situation.

I can assure the parliamentary assistant that I am sure the intention of this government was not to put into place a situation that could exacerbate the labour relations difficulties that are being experienced between public service unions and their various employers. I'm quite sure this issue of decertification, of raiding of unions at particular specified times in the contract, was not thought out well by the Solicitor General in terms of public safety when this bill was brought forward. It is our view, and it is certainly the view of the fire chiefs and the firefighters, that this entire part of the act was devised by the labour ministry and foisted into this act without a lot of analysis by the public safety people in the Ministry of the Solicitor General. That is part of where the concern is coming from, because this is a very special kind of employment relationship and it doesn't necessarily fit well into those regular labour relations situations that may pertain in other, less safety-oriented jobs.

The scope of collective bargaining in this act is a question. I talked about the minimum hours of work. They cannot bargain around those issues, and that's troublesome. There's also an explicit provision in this bill, in subsections 52(2), (3) and (4), for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to determine the maximum amount of pension benefit available to a firefighter under the pension act. We all know control of the



OMERS pension is nominally given to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. This means that a collective agreement could not provide a pension benefit greater than that determined by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and that's a worry because that has not been the case in the past.

**Mandatory conciliation:** This sounds good on the surface. This sounds as though there is a real effort in this bill to take away from the adversarial aspects of labour relations. But from the firefighters' perspective it's an added step that is being put upon them without their ever having asked for it, and it is an added cost. It is quite clear that this requirement to go through a system of conciliation, with the government appointing a conciliator to mediate collective bargaining disputes before they can be referred to interest arbitration, is very serious. Unlike the provisions for other employers and employees under the Labour Relations Act, firefighters and municipalities are required by this act to share the cost of that, to each pay one half of the cost of the conciliation services. The minister has the authority — I'm not sure which minister — to determine the cost of conciliation, and his or her determination is binding. That's a whole step put in there that's never been there before, a whole cost to both firefighters and their employers that has never been there before, and they have no control over the cost of that process. The minister has control over the cost of that process.

The bill provides for interest arbitration that is not, I think, in very real terms very different from interest arbitration as it has applied in the past to firefighters, with one exception. The current legislation enables the Solicitor General to appoint arbitrators where the parties cannot agree, but this bill seems to indicate that a member of the Ontario Labour Relations Board would necessarily be the appointed one to both interest and grievance arbitration boards. It also provides for the authority of the minister to make such appointments.

That may be looked at as being some flexibility there. That may not necessarily be a bad thing. But it's a different thing from the point of view of firefighters, and I think it would be important to understand why this bill allows for regulations to make that determination rather than spelling out whether arbitrators would be appointed by the minister, as is currently the case, or whether a member of the Ontario Labour Relations Board would be appointed. They're concerned about that and they need to know.

1750

The criteria of Bill 26 apply to all these interest arbitrations. That is of real concern to firefighters. Those of us who have been watching what has happened with the strong pressure from municipalities around the cost of firefighting services and the kinds of pressures that municipalities are going to face, given the continual downloading of this government and the lack of municipal grants — the requirement under Bill 26 that ability to pay be part of the consideration is of real worry to firefighters. They've expressed that concern in the past.

Also in terms of grievance arbitration, the act expands the current powers of grievance arbitrators, which are under the Fire Departments Act, and brings them more in

line with the broader powers that arbitrators have under the Labour Relations Act. Arbitrators now would be given the specific power to order the production of documents, to require the parties to provide one another with the particulars of the case, to summon witnesses, to set hearing dates, to apply human rights and other employment-related statutes in giving decisions, to make interim orders excluding orders to reinstate employees pending the conclusion of the hearing, and to modify disciplinary penalties. Arbitrators would also have the authority to remedy any violations of the time limit provisions in the grievance procedure that's in the collective agreement unless the parties agree to remove that authority.

It is important to understand that this may, in the long run, not prove to be an area of real concern. Firefighters are saying: "What's the rationale for this? We might have agreed with it if we'd had some consultation, but we want to know why that broader power is there when it hasn't been there in most grievance procedures under most collective agreements."

The number of times in this act that things are left up to regulation and that the minister brings forward the regulation — I go back to the concern about which minister this is going to be — is of real concern. The ability of those working with this new, consolidated act: Knowing that the major piece of this is going to be the subject of regulations, the whole piece about the fire code, the very rules under which they work — also, so many aspects of the labour relations part are going to be left up to regulation — causes real anxiety.

I can understand why there is reluctance to talk about what sort of regulations the minister is considering, but I think it would go a long way to allaying some of the fears that people have, certainly with respect to the fire code. If the minister were able to present as part of the information to the hearings what is anticipated in a new fire code, a lot of the concerns about what this bill really means in terms of public safety would certainly be allayed. That would be an important thing.

But with this change in labour relations regime, it would be important in terms of describing to firefighters why the government has decided that this is a more appropriate way to deal with things than the current regime, which has worked very well. They really want to know. What is it that is contemplated here? Why has the government made a determination that these changes are going to happen, and where it's left to regulation or where it's unclear in the bill, what is the intention of the government?

I, myself, think that in the weeks since this act was introduced the minister has probably heard — I know he has certainly received letters; I have copies of many of the letters he's received — not just from firefighters and their organizations, but from the fire chiefs, from individual mayors who are concerned, from individual citizens who are concerned. He probably is more aware than he was when he introduced the bill how serious this is.

He read out some letters from fire chiefs who were in favour of the bill, so I'm going to read out some letters from fire chiefs who have qualms about the bill. I'm



going to read a letter from Max Hussey, who is the fire chief in Waterloo, interestingly enough the Minister of Labour's community:

"On behalf of the Waterloo Fire Department and the Waterloo Professional Fire Fighters Association, I would respectfully ask that you forward our concerns to the Honourable Elizabeth Witmer, Minister of Labour of the province of Ontario, regarding part IX (labour relations) portion of Bill 84.

"I believe that Bill 84 for the most part is long overdue and will enhance the standard of fire service in the city of Waterloo and province of Ontario. I have some concerns, however, that part IX of the bill will create unfair labour practices by changing freely negotiated collective agreements through legislative reform, ie, changing hours of work for firefighters, privatization of fire departments, and contracting out services traditionally performed by the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association.

"While part-time firefighters do serve a very useful service in rural areas of the province, they will not enhance fire protection services to the citizens of Waterloo. I believe that we are very well served by full-time professional firefighters who are trained in all aspects of firefighting today, and this would be very hard to achieve with part-time staff.

"In closing, I would like to reiterate that I am in favour of the legislative reform in Bill 84 with the exception of part IX which has the potential of destroying excellent labour-management relationships in the city of Waterloo and the fire service in general."

That was written on November 21.

I have a similar letter from Arthur Cutten, who is the fire chief in the Guelph department, raising concerns about the minimum number of firefighters who would be called back in case of an emergency and definition of "major emergency." He points out that you could find yourself negotiating with traditional trade unions that

have not traditionally represented firefighters and what that might mean to the labour relations regime within fire departments.

He indicated about the restrictions on bargaining working conditions: "It seems to me that the ability to bargain in respect to all of one's working conditions is fundamentally an issue of morality. There should be no restrictions."

Concern about the exclusions: "The question of exclusions from the bargaining unit will, in my opinion, create many problems for existing managers. Are we to create new positions that will be filled with new staff? I would love to have an assistant deputy or two!!

"If we are to rename existing positions managerial, who will they be? Who will do the acting? Will or can persons going in and out of the collective agreement?"

We don't know.

The deputy chief from Windsor raises all sorts of questions in detail about the act. I assume these have been sent to the minister because they are very important. There are many of the issues that I have raised today around definitional issues, around lack of clarity in the act, so it is not just the firefighter associations that are expressing concerns, it's the people who are responsible for managing, it is the people who in many cases understand entirely what this will mean in terms of destroying the relationships they have worked years to build up with firefighters.

I know there are many of my colleagues in our party who have specific examples from their own communities and who will want to speak on this bill. It's important for us to continue with that.

I have a few more minutes, Mr Speaker. I think I will sum up tomorrow, it being nearly 6 of the clock.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. It is now 6 of the clock. This House stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1759.*



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**Thursday 19 December 1996**

**Jeudi 19 décembre 1996**



**Speaker**  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

**Président**  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 19 December 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 19 décembre 1996

*The House met at 1331.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### HOMELESSNESS

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** The recommendations from the inquest on homelessness were released last summer but this government has not taken any action to address the issue of homelessness in Ontario.

The Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness was thrown out of the Minister of Housing's office when they tried to peacefully deliver a letter to the minister's office because no response had come to a letter dated July 30, 1996. The exchange was videotaped by Vision TV and aired on television. The reception area of the Minister of Housing's office was locked, making it impossible for them to deliver the letter. They were forced to make their presentation in the hallway in front of the elevators.

A member of the minister's staff came out and told the coalition that homelessness was not an area of responsibility of the Minister of Housing but of the Minister of Community and Social Services. When an attempt was made to question the Comsoc minister, she told them homelessness was the responsibility of the Minister of Housing.

The fact is, no one in that government is taking any responsibility for dealing with homelessness. No minister is taking any action on the recommendations on homelessness and no one will even meet with representatives of the homeless. The doors are wide open for developers and landlords, but are locked to tenants, the poor and the most vulnerable.

The Minister of Housing is in such haste to ram through Bill 96, his tenant rejection act. His plan will create more homelessness because once Bill 96 is law it will push rent so high for the poor and the vulnerable that there will no longer be any affordable accommodation.

### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** In this House yesterday, the Attorney General set up a question from the member for Huron, and he used, I would say for political purposes, a judgement that was made in a London family court concerning the family support plan. He suggested in that statement that the finding of His Honour Judge Vogelsang somehow vindicated the government's actions in terms of closing down the family support plan.

I wanted to correct the impression people may have got. This is an order that is pursuant to a case brought by

lawyer Vic Mitro on behalf of seven women, all of whom had been receiving their family support cheques until the minister abruptly closed the regional offices.

This case has been continued until January 21. It is a case of damages against the director of the family support plan. It is a case alleging that it was the actions of the Attorney General in closing down the plan that caused the effect on these women, and the judgement by Mr Justice Vogelsang that one of the people in the case be allowed to withdraw her case from the family support plan was to try to ameliorate the financial effects of the absolute disaster that the Attorney General had caused in her case.

### ONTARIO REGIMENT ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION BRANCH 43

**Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** It's with great pleasure that I rise to address not only the visiting delegation from Manitoba in the east gallery, but the House as well concerning the Ontario Regiment, the Royal Canadian Armoured Corps and the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 43.

This year the Ontario Regiment celebrated its 130th birthday. That is 130 years of continuous service to Canada. The regiment is one of the oldest continuing regiments in Canada. On September 14, 1866, the Ontario Regiment was officially formed from the independent rifle companies of the then Ontario county.

Today the Ontario Regiment continues to provide personnel for NATO and United Nations peacekeeping operations. Nine members of the Ontario Regiment served in Bosnia in 1995 with the Royal Canadian Dragoons. In 1995, the Ontario Regiment won the Worthington Trophy as the best reserve armoured regiment in Canada.

In October 1996, the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 43 celebrated its 70th anniversary. Branch 43 currently enjoys a membership of over 2,100 members and is a strong part of Oshawa's community. Branch 43 sponsors over 35 local charities, sports and youth groups.

I would like to thank the Ontario Regiment and the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 43 for their many years of honourable and faithful service to Canada, the province of Ontario and the city of Oshawa.

Merry Christmas to all and happy holidays. Get well, Josh. And thank you, Mr Speaker, for the good job you're doing.

### SENIOR CITIZENS

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** On this, the final day of this assembly before we all leave to return to our homes and communities for the Christmas break, I

believe it is imperative that each and every one of us in this House, and in particular the current Minister of Health, be mindful of the fear and apprehension that has been handed to senior citizens just in time for Christmas.

Over the past few days, the Minister of Health has had numerous opportunities to allay these fears by ruling out additional user fees and delisted services. Instead, he resorted to partisan shots and finger-pointing.

This is quite a Christmas present the minister has handed to the sick and the elderly. I've been hearing from worried senior constituents on a daily basis. They are becoming all too familiar with the way this government continues to amputate our health care system while expecting our seniors to bear a tremendous burden.

Sophie Zeber is an excellent example of the anger building up among our seniors. She asked me to remind the Minister of Health that the seniors you are targeting have in fact paid the taxes to sustain these programs believing they could depend on them in their old age.

A thought for you, Mr Minister, while you are on your Christmas break: When you grow old along with the rest of society, won't you expect, just like every other Ontarian, that the health care services you will need will be there when you need them?

#### MATTHEWS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** On behalf of the Central Algoma Board of Education and the people of the North Shore and St Joseph Island, I want to raise serious concerns about the proposals of the Plummer Memorial Public Hospital for the future of Matthews Memorial Hospital in Richards Landing.

Recent emergency events in the local schools have left us very concerned with the decision to downsize the services and staffing at Matthews Memorial Hospital. Had this plan been in place, one of the Central Algoma students may have died from allergic reaction to an insect sting. Three others would also have been placed in jeopardy with allergic reactions to hepatitis B vaccine inoculations. With only one nurse on duty and no additional support available, this situation could have been deadly.

The one-nurse standard is not acceptable in this rural area. Without the staff and expertise to support and stabilize patients, the death rate is bound to climb with the additional time required to obtain services in Sault Ste Marie and to transport patients that far.

We are also concerned about the impact of lost services in the areas of X-ray, blood tests etc, which will leave many local residents unserved since the trip to Sault Ste Marie may be impossible, delayed or a great expense to the health care system.

I hope the government will consider a community-based health care model which will have —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

1340

#### BRAMPTON FIREFIGHTERS

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North):** On behalf of my colleague the member for Brampton South, it gives me great pleasure to bring to the Legislature's attention

congratulations to the recent accomplishment of the Brampton firefighters.

On Saturday, December 14, the Brampton firefighters combat challenge A team won the world championship title at the Las Vegas MGM Grand Hotel. The Brampton team beat out approximately 100 teams from around the world. They broke their own world record by two seconds, completing the course with a team time of five minutes, 22 seconds.

I want to congratulate the members of the combat A team: Mark Evans, Gary Wilton, Peter Reid, Rob Wohlfield, Don Rowland and their coach, Doug Comeau.

The physically demanding course, completed in full gear, involved running up four flights of stairs, carrying a high-rise pack, hoisting a 40-pound roll of hose four storeys, pounding a metal beam five feet using an eight-pound hammer, carrying a charged hose 75 feet and dragging a 175-pound dummy 100 feet. It wasn't a member of the opposition.

I also want to thank members of their B team who were also successful and finished in 25th place. The members are: Brent Hastings, Hal Gillett, Ian Dalbec, Ralph Ferrari and Ryan Agard.

On behalf of all of the members of the Legislature, I congratulate the Brampton firefighters for becoming world champs and for disproving the myth that beating the odds in Las Vegas is impossible.

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott and Russell):** My statement is for the Attorney General. Minister, yesterday in this House you said that all calls to the family support plan office were being answered and that services had improved since the closing of the regional offices. Well, let me tell you that my staff has called the family support plan office every day this week and we have yet to get a response. Still today, many women from my riding are not getting any money, money that has been collected from their ex-spouses.

The Attorney General refuses to acknowledge that the closure of the regional offices was done too quickly and that the computer system is a complete failure at the present time. What I have here is proof of the complete chaos that presently exists in the family support plan office. I have here three cheques that have been issued by the family support plan office. These cheques are addressed to nobody. Since Prescott and Russell social services could not get through to the family support plan office, they called my office asking my staff whose money that is.

I am asking the Attorney General to admit that the changes to the family support plan have been a complete failure and to reopen the regional offices until the chaotic situation is resolved.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** This past Tuesday, bright and early at 8 o'clock, I attended a love-in at the board of trade where the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing announced the amalgamation to all of his chums. It was quite exciting to see the sea of blue



suits in harmony and homogeneously frothing at the prospect of having this megacity facilitate their development and financial interests. How easy they thought it would be to have easier access to one mega-government while shutting the doors at the same time for regular folks.

It was interesting, the political dichotomy that I observed: demagoguery in Metro and democracy in 905; omnipotence and omniscience in Metro and deference and discussion in Toryland 905; Metro needs Minister Leach's leadership in Metro, but in 905 they need facilitators to guide them; on the referendum, this government believes that it needs referenda on major issues, but in Metro he says, "Oh, we don't need one, and we're trying to convince them that it's a waste of time and it's a waste of money."

Minister, I want to thank you. I want to thank Minister Alzila for algamating all of the cities in Metro. I have a gift for him. I have some coal here that I want to have him put in his Christmas stocking.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Coal is out of order.

### TAX REDUCTION

**Ms Isabel Bassett (St Andrew-St Patrick):** On January 1, hardworking Ontarians will receive the second phase of their Ontario personal income tax cut, exactly as promised. Easing the tax burden allows hardworking Ontarians to keep more of their own money and give them choices. They can spend it, save it or invest it. Whatever their choice, they will be helping to create a stronger economy, and a stronger economy means more jobs.

Since the first stage of the tax cut was implemented, Ontario's economy has generated nearly 67% of all the jobs created in Canada. But giving Ontarians a tax break is not the only action that we are taking to promote job creation in this province. On January 1, all businesses will see the first reduction in the employer health tax. By 1999, 88% of all private sector employers will no longer have to file a payroll tax return, exactly as promised.

We promised we would cut personal income tax in Ontario, and we are. We promised we would eliminate the employer health tax on small businesses with payrolls under \$400,000, and we are. I am pleased to tell the House today that our plan to get Ontario working again is back on track.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The spirit of Christmas is oozing forth, I can see.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Fort York, I can't hear you. It doesn't matter.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### SALARY OF SENIOR CIVIL SERVANTS

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** In the absence of the Premier, my question is for the Chair of Management Board, or, as senior bureaucrats are now calling him, Santa Claus. Earlier this week, on the eve of

Christmas, Mike Harris quietly decided to hand out some Christmas goodies to his senior bureaucrats. That gift will raise the starting salary for a deputy minister by more than \$40,000. That gift makes it possible for a deputy minister to make as much as \$192,000 a year. That's a 27% pay raise, not bad money if you can get it.

Minister, given the hundreds of thousands of people who will have less food on their plates this Christmas because of your government's cuts, how can you justify these massive raises for Ontario's highest-paid bureaucrats?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** This is a question for referral to the Deputy Premier.

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** To the leader of the official opposition, under this plan we are going to actually — I know this is a thought that may be foreign to your party — link pay to productivity and to performance. I know that may be a foreign thought over there —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order, members.

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** Your increase is more than what you give welfare moms.

**The Speaker:** Member for Oriole — we'll get on it right off the top — come to order. I want to hear what the minister has to say.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** The leader of the third party, as well.

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** But it's terrible what he's saying, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** That's for someone else to decide. Minister?

**Hon Mr Eves:** We are meeting our CSR commitment to increase accountability within the ranks of the senior civil service. At the end of the social contract, as the leader of the official opposition will know, if we had reinstated the old existing pay system we would have cost the Ontario taxpayers \$17 million more than under this pay-for-performance system.

**Mr McGuinty:** It doesn't matter how the minister slices it or dices it, we're talking about a 27% pay raise for the highest-paid bureaucrats in the province. The minister wants to give like Santa but save like Scrooge. Apparently, there's lots of money to give his highest-paid bureaucrats, but he's got no money for kids living in poverty, no money for women who need shelters, who can't get the money for their children's Christmas gifts out of the family support plan. The numbers of people living on the street are at record levels. Food bank use has grown astronomically. The Salvation Army in London tells that the number of requests for Christmas baskets is up by 50% this year.

1350

Minister, this is a question of priorities. What is more important to you, making sure that a child living in poverty can have a full meal at Christmas, making sure there are gifts from Santa under the tree, or giving government employees already making over \$140,000 a year a 27% pay raise?



**Hon Mr Eves:** A study found that people at the deputy minister and assistant deputy minister level were being paid 19% to 25% less than comparable jobs in the broader public sector.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** So what?

**Hon Mr Eves:** "So what?" the honourable member says.

To the leader of the official opposition, as I said in response to his first question, this will cost the Ontario taxpayer \$17 million less than reinstating the old system, which is what they would have done, at the end of the social contract.

**Mr McGuinty:** What the minister doesn't understand is that it's not a question of want. Who doesn't want a pay raise? It's a question of need. That's what this is all about at the end of the day.

This is going to be based on performance. I guess if it's based on performance, if a deputy minister closes another hospital, you get a pay hike. If you shut down the family support plan, you get a pay hike.

Minister, you've already laid off thousands of people, you're forcing seniors to pay new user fees for their drugs, you have literally taken food from the poor and your cuts to the family support plan are going to ruin Christmas for thousands of kids. Because of your government's cuts, this will not be a merry Christmas for many people in Ontario.

I ask you once again, how is it possible that you don't have any money for the most vulnerable in society but you can afford to give tens of thousands of dollars for each of the highest-paid bureaucrats in the government? How is that possible?

**Hon Mr Eves:** Since June 1995 we have reduced the number of senior public servants in this province by 11% and there is another 25% yet to be reduced between now and the year 2000; we have reduced the number of deputy ministers from 28 to 21; two thirds of these senior public servants will receive absolutely no pay increase this year at all — I don't think that's the impression you just left with the Ontario public; and we are saving the Ontario taxpayers \$17 million.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I want to tell the member for Hamilton East, you are out of order. You are not in your seat. I will name you next time. I tell the member for Sudbury as well, and also the member for Oriole.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. With each passing day, people are becoming more and more aware that your megacity madness is about three things: mega-taxes, mega-cuts to services and mega-dictatorship by the province. I want to focus on each of those.

Let's talk about mega-cuts in services. In North York, people have their garbage picked up twice a week, snow is removed faster than in other parts of Metro and there's free use of swimming pools. Minister, I want you to stand in your place today and I want you to guarantee the people of North York that after you use your tin-pot

dictatorship rules to force them into a megacity, they're going to continue to get twice-a-week garbage pickup, they're going to get fast snow removal and they're going to get free use of swimming pools. I want you to guarantee that.

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** The Leader of the Opposition again is a little bit mistaken, because the proposals we're bringing in and the new city we're going to create will result in less taxes, better services, better management.

We have an excellent opportunity here, in creating this new city, to set best practice service standards. It's an idea that has sprung up across North America that all major cities are looking at, that we have an ability to set a standard for the delivery of services that is efficient and practical and affordable. We have an opportunity to do this right across the board with the new city. It's a very exciting opportunity that we have.

**Mr McGuinty:** I'll take that as a no, that he cannot provide that guarantee.

Let's move on. Minister, let's talk about your mega tax hikes. This megacity madness is just another part of your plan, as you well know, to ram through your version of MVA. It's about higher taxes for many homeowners and small shopkeepers in the city of Toronto, in the borough of East York.

Minister, I want you to stand in your place today and guarantee people in the city of Toronto and the borough of East York who live in older neighbourhoods or who own small shops on Queen Street that after your dictatorship forces them into a megacity, they will not have to pay higher taxes. I want that guarantee.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I don't know how the Leader of the Opposition draws the comparison between amalgamation and tax reform, but what I will tell the Leader of the Opposition is that we're bringing in a tax reform that is going to bring fairness and equity to the totally disgruntled, messed up, terrible tax system that we have now. There are going to be shifts in taxes. There are people who have been paying lower taxes than they should have for the last 20 years. There are also people who are paying more taxes than they should be paying. We're going to bring some fairness and equity to the system that makes sure everybody pays their fair share and no more.

**Mr McGuinty:** That's strike two: There's no guarantee against tax hikes.

Let's try another one. I want to talk about your dictatorial powers. You put the people of Metro Toronto under trusteeship. Clearly, you're doing this to stifle political opposition.

Minister, the city of Toronto has many tenants who are deeply disturbed about your plans to get rid of rent control. Now, the city of Toronto, as you well know, has been representing its tenants' wishes by fighting your plans. That costs money. Minister, I want you to stand up here today and tell the tenants of Toronto that if they want their council to continue fighting your abandonment of rent controls, your hand-appointed trustees will not prevent them from spending money on this most important cause. I want you to provide that guarantee.



**Hon Mr Leach:** Under the rules of the trustees, the city of Toronto or any of the municipalities can carry on business as usual. If they had budgeted that money, if they had planned to spend that money, they can continue to spend that money. The trustees are there to ensure that the cities don't take unreasonable positions, such as selling off their assets, for example. But if it's business as usual on any item, the city will be able to continue to do that.

#### SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I have a question for the minister responsible for women's issues. Yesterday, Minister, both you and your Premier said that you would not make any changes to the services for abused women that would put them at greater risk. This morning at 11 am, a large number of women gathered together to send your government a message based on your promises and the Premier's promises made yesterday.

Here's what they had to say: "We believe that the consultant's report was an all-out attack on services provided to abused women and their children across the province. We demand that the government denounce this report, following the Premier's statement that he would not put abused women at risk."

Victoria, a survivor of abuse, said, "This report, in its entirety, harms women, and you must dismiss it and throw it in the garbage." Will you do that, Minister? Will you throw that entire report in the garbage, where it belongs?

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues):** There are certainly no plans to throw a consultant's report in the garbage. I would say that there are plans for people like Victoria and others to respond to the report in any way they wish to respond. We're looking for written submissions in some detail if they want to. This is the very beginning of a consultation to improve the quality of our programs and the mix of programs, to put more emphasis on where people want emphasis and prevention of violence.

I should say that this is just the beginning. This consultant's report will form only one piece of the input that the government is looking for. In response to the leader of the third party, this report is not about cutting services; this report is about making a better mix of services, having some accountability and safety for women in Ontario, and promoting safe communities, a very serious issue that affects all of us.

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**Mr Hampton:** That's about what we expected in terms of a response. Women across the province want the government to throw this report in the garbage. They know it's garbage, they know it's all about more cuts, they know it means more cuts, like cuts to access to legal aid, cuts to pay equity, cuts to employment equity, cuts to counselling services, cuts to transition houses, cuts to public education aimed at ending violence against women, cuts in funding for community agencies, cuts in social assistance. All the supports that abused women

have relied on have already been cut by your government. Women know this report is all about more cuts. Women across the province, especially abused women, know what your agenda is. They know it's more cuts, they know it's more of a continuation of what you've already done. They want you to throw that report in the garbage. They want you to live up to what the Premier and you said yesterday, that you will not put women at greater risk. They want you to throw that report in the garbage. Will you do that?

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** I think that the statements made by the leader of the third party are particularly misleading and harmful to the public of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** That's particularly out of order. You can't say that.

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** I withdraw my words that are out of order, Mr Speaker.

It's extremely important that at this time in Ontario we take the lead, as other governments are doing throughout Canada, across North America and even internationally, to take a look at our programs that are there to support women who have been victims of violence. One small piece of information that we have received after a lot of study and a lot of important work by consultants tells us that there are some good things and there are some areas where we should be improving our programs. It's our intent to do that after we look at an analysis across nine ministries.

**The Speaker:** Final supplementary.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** Some of the women who are here today and others, this morning at a press conference, gave you a very clear message as to what to do with this report: Throw it in the garbage. That's what they had to say to you. You have attempted now to back away from this report. You and the Premier say that nothing you will do will put abused women at risk. I have a memo here from the Kingston area office of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, your government; I'm going to send a copy over to you. The memo is dated October 15, 1996. In the memo to service providers the government's vision is outlined, making no mention of prevention but listing the elements of your vision as community support, meaning not ministry support, accountability, fiscal responsibility, efficiency, rationalization and fairness. The memo changes the role of shelters to "crisis, short-term place and emergency responses." Is this not the implementation of your consultant's report? What exactly does this mean?

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** I should make it clear to the member that the consultant's report did go through a very strenuous call-for-proposal process, that the consultant is an extremely well-known and responsible person, that in my view this memo has nothing to do with the consultant's report. I'm not aware of the memo. I haven't had a chance to look at the memo. I will of course give it to the Minister of Community and Social Services because it is apparently from one of her offices. We're interested in hearing from all women.

**Ms Churley:** She has absolutely no shame.

**The Speaker:** Member for Riverdale, that's out of order. I ask you to withdraw.



**Ms Churley:** She has absolutely no shame, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** I'm not asking you for your opinion; I'm asking you if you're going to withdraw that comment. I'm sorry, is it withdrawn?

**Ms Churley:** I've withdrawn the comment.

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** I don't think that kind of statement is helpful on anyone's behalf. I think we're talking about an extremely important issue here: violence against women. We've been looking for solutions for many years. We don't have all the answers. It's an extremely complicated issue, and I can assure the women here in the gallery that we would very much appreciate hearing from them directly. I would like to hear your points of view and I will listen carefully to you.

#### SALARIES OF SENIOR CIVIL SERVANTS

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My second question is for the Deputy Premier. Could you explain something to people across this province? Your government says there is no money for the family support plan. Your government says that women and children who are legally entitled to support payments must do without, have their power shut off, go to food banks to get food, have their telephone disconnected, that you have no money, yet today you are giving senior civil servants, who already make in the neighbourhood of \$150,000, a \$40,000 pay increase.

Deputy Premier, can you explain to people why your government has no money for the family support plan, no money for women and children so they can eat and pay their rent and pay for the electricity, but you've got \$40,000 additional pay for people who already earn \$150,000 a year?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** We are not saying that at all, and you know it. First of all, when you were in government and you were a member of cabinet, there were 28 deputy ministers. There are now 21. Your government instituted the social contract, at the expiry of which they automatically reverted to their old salary under the old plan. That solution would cost Ontario taxpayers \$17 million more a year than this plan will.

**Mr Hampton:** Let me try this a different way. The Deputy Premier wants to say there are fewer deputy ministers, but then he wants to leave out that this government is going to pay consultants \$2,500 a day.

I ask the question again. You're going to go out to hire consultants at \$2,500 a day. You're going to give deputy ministers a \$40,000-a-year pay increase. At the other end of the scale, for the poorest people in this province — some of them are here today — you've cut their social assistance by 22%. How do you do that? How do you justify giving some of the highest-paid bureaucrats a 27% pay increase, hiring consultants out of the private sector at \$2,500 a day, while you put other people in a position where they can't even afford to pay for food? How do you justify that?

**Hon Mr Eves:** First of all, if he was not listening to the answer I gave to the leader of the official opposition,

he's not telling it exactly the way it is. Two thirds of senior civil servants in the province will receive absolutely zero pay increase this year. That is not what you lead people to believe, that every single one will receive \$40,000 more. I'd appreciate it if in your next supplementary you would come clean and admit that two thirds of senior civil servants will receive zero pay increase this year and they will not be reinstated to receive \$17 million more of the taxpayers' money, which your plan would have done for them.

We have reduced senior civil servants in the province by some 11% and we will further reduce them by an additional 25%, making 36% fewer civil servants in the province of Ontario by the year 2000.

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**Mr Hampton:** I still haven't heard an answer. This government tries to do an end run: They lay off a few senior civil servants, and then they go out and hire consultants at \$2,500 a day, in other words, \$25,000 every two weeks.

I want to say again that I haven't heard an explanation here. I have not heard an explanation of how you can cut the family support plan, how you can cut social assistance, how you could cut funding for abused women, how you can cut funding for those people who are in the greatest need, how you can cut funding for the Metropolitan Toronto Association for Community Living, who serve 4,000 disabled clients — I haven't heard an explanation of how you can cut funding for all those people who are not well-off and yet you've got money for those who are very well-off indeed.

You mentioned something in your story that civil servants are going to get more if they implement your government policies effectively. Is that what it means, Minister: If they're successful in chopping the family support plan, they get more money? If they're successful in hurting —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. Deputy Premier?

**Hon Mr Eves:** The leader of the third party apparently is not listening. There are going to be 36% fewer senior civil servants in the province of Ontario by the year —

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Order. The member for Welland-Thorold is out of order. Everyone can see you're not in your seat.

**Hon Mr Eves:** There will be 36% fewer senior civil servants in the province of Ontario by the year 2000 than there were in 1995: 36% fewer. This government, speaking of consultants, has spent far less money on consultants than your government, by far. There is no doubt about that.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I'd like to ask you about your new role as emperor of Metro Toronto. Emperor, yesterday you proclaimed that a referendum is too costly.

*Interjection.*



**Mr Cordiano:** No, this is serious. Your Premier, Mike Harris, called it — what did he say? — a wasteful act of desperation. As part of your army's occupation of Metro Toronto, you've unleashed a propaganda machine to promote your dictatorship. Your army is distributing to households across Metro brochures espousing the virtues of the new order. This is what you're distributing, this brochure; this is the piece. Democracy is too expensive, but propaganda is apparently not. How can you justify the hypocrisy of your government spending \$1 million on this government propaganda? How do you do that?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** Just to make sure that the record is clear, the cost of the program is \$300,000 to get information out to the public, information that the public has been asking for. I wish we had more money to spend on it, but we have cut back drastically on our advertising program. I wish I had a whole lot more money to tell the people of Metropolitan Toronto the facts. We're providing them with that information.

**Mr Cordiano:** Your Highness, you've made it very clear. You've issued your imperial decree. You've said it's okay in Mike Harris's realm for consultants to be paid \$2,600 a day, that that's not a waste for taxpayers; and it's okay for top bureaucrats to get a 27% raise because that's not a waste for taxpayers but entirely justifiable; and it's okay for you to spend a million bucks on this silly brochure that promotes the government, that that's not a waste as far as you're concerned.

It's now clear that the Premier doesn't care about Metro Toronto or its residents. It's up to you, because he's written off Metro Toronto and he's written off the citizens of this great metropolis. It's up to you, Minister. It's your riding. They're your constituents. Will you get off your imaginary throne, come back down to earth and do something about it? Will you stand up and support my private member's resolution for a referendum?

**Hon Mr Leach:** Again I would like to set the record clear. I want to make sure that the record is very clear. Where the member opposite throws this wild number of \$1 million around, he's totally off base. I told him the cost of the program —

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Leach:** Listen now, very carefully. I'll say it slowly. The cost of the program is \$300,000, and that's a small amount to ensure that the citizens of Metropolitan Toronto have the information they need to see what's going to happen, to see the improvements that are going to be there for them when the new city comes into effect.

With respect to the referendum, I don't think I could say it any clearer than the editorial in the Toronto Globe this morning: "The Harris government has the constitutional power, the public responsibility and the political mandate to act. A referendum on the issue is not called for."

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Would the member for Grey-Owen Sound come to order, please.

New question; the member for Dovercourt.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Let's talk about power and

let's talk about democracy, namely, your attempt to use your power to stifle democracy in Metropolitan Toronto.

Just two days ago, you said in response to a question I put to you that while you disagreed with a referendum taking place in Metro, you would not use any powers you have to block that referendum from taking place.

Today I read in the Toronto Star something very different. You seem to be indicating that you won't hesitate to use your trusteeship powers, to have the trustees do your dirty work for you and try to block the municipalities from holding the referendum that the councils, one after the other, are voting and have voted that they want to hold.

I think you owe a very clear answer on this. Will you give a guarantee today that you will not use the powers of the trustees, a body that does not yet exist in law, by the way, to block the elected councils from holding a referendum?

**Hon Mr Leach:** If the cities around Metro want to hold a referendum, that's their prerogative. They can do that. The trustees would not interfere with that.

However, in a meeting with the mayors of all the cities, the Premier of the province and I, we discussed the referendum question. We pointed out the problems with the referendum; we pointed out how it would be ineffective, that the answer would have no consequences, and told them that we would not accept the results of a loaded-question referendum.

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**Mr Silipo:** We will see what consequences the answer to the referendum question will have, because we will see what will happen if this minister and this Premier try to go against the democratic will as expressed by the people of Toronto in a referendum. We will see what happens.

I appreciate at least that the minister today has again said that he will not, directly or indirectly, try to block the referendum. I hope that when you go out in the scrum you will say the same thing and I will not have to read tomorrow a very different answer, as I've been doing for the last little while as you go back and forth on this point.

The other point I want to ask you about is this, because the other day you did not give me a clear answer on this other point: As you try to get the legislation through this place, will you be clear today in ensuring that there will be ample public hearings and that you will not try to ram the legislation through in a way to block the referendum from happening or to have the referendum take place after you've tried to put the legislation through the House? Will you ensure that the hearings are held later on in February, in March, following the referendum that's going to be held in Metropolitan Toronto?

**Hon Mr Leach:** The member opposite knows that it's the Legislature that controls how legislation is processed. The bill will go to second reading and it will go to committee. There will be ample opportunity for people to have input into the process, as they do with every bill that goes through this Legislature. That's the fair and democratic way, and this is a fair and democratic government.



## BEEF PRODUCERS

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth):** My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. I would like to remind those who need reminding that the great county of Perth has 8,500 beef cows, it has 13,000 steers and it has 110,300 beef cattle and calves production. The reason I'm reminding both of those parties in opposition of the great county of Perth is that I want to ask the minister: It's my understanding that the Ontario beef producers have access to loan guarantee programs to provide lower cost loans for purchasing beef cattle. I wonder if the minister could elaborate on the purpose of such a program.

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** I thank my colleague from Perth for the question. Yes, agriculture is important in many counties of Ontario, including Perth county, in spite of what the NDP are saying. They don't realize the importance of food production.

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** Well, it sounds like a joke. However, it's the second-most important industry in the province of Ontario.

We have two loan guarantees for our food producers. We have —

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** You, quite obviously, do not know the difference. The beef improvement association and the beef cattle protection plan is in place, along with protection for grain producers. We have brought both together so that the beef improvement program, the beef cattle protection program will provide \$200 million of guarantee to our beef producers and will provide cheaper food to the consumers of Ontario.

**Mr Bert Johnson:** I just want to remind some of the members who don't know the difference between a bull and steers and beef that of course the bull makes beef. I wonder, Minister —

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** Mr Speaker, what about the hospitals over there?

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Cochrane South, this is just not that controversial a question. Let's see if we can get through it. The member for Perth.

**Mr Bert Johnson:** I wonder if the minister could tell us how these programs have benefited Ontario's beef producers.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** These two programs have been instrumental in helping beef and crop producers compete in a world where it's difficult to compete. There have been no draws against the guarantees on beef and very few on the guarantees against the grain producers.

Low interest rates in Ontario have helped producers to be more competitive, and indeed the government of Ontario is providing additional insurance to make sure they remain competitive in a world where competition is what it's all about. The NDP do not understand that at all.

**Mr Bisson:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would ask unanimous consent for the member for Perth to ask

a question about hospital closings in his riding, because I am sure it's on his mind.

**The Speaker:** The member for Cochrane South is seeking unanimous consent to allow the member for Perth to ask a supplementary question on hospital closings.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I heard a "no." New question.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** I have a question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. As you know, the people of Metropolitan Toronto have been put in trusteeship, yet in the rest of the province you are setting up facilitators, you are setting up negotiations, you're giving them a year, five years to do what they have to do. I asked you yesterday why this dictate to the citizens of Toronto. And why would you, in an answer to the member for Lawrence, when he asked you a very straightforward question — he said to you, "Will you allow the people of Metro Toronto a say in how they're going to be governed?" Your answer was: "Let me think about that for a minute. No."

Is this your attitude towards the taxpayers of Metropolitan Toronto? Do you think it's fair to say to them: "Let me think about that for a minute. No"? What do you want to say to the people of Toronto on your attitude?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I truly thank the member for Oakwood for giving me the opportunity to set the record straight. The member for Lawrence asked me yesterday, would I vote in favour of his private member's bill? He said that very clearly and he repeated the question today. On both occasions, I told him that I would not support his private member's bill. That's all there was.

**Mr Colle:** I think the record is clear. The question again, Mr Minister, was to you, very direct: "Will you allow the people of Metro Toronto a say...?" Your answer, in a very arrogant, dictatorial way, was to write the people off, to write the member for Lawrence off, and to say very smugly and arrogantly: "Wait a minute. No."

Mr Minister, I just wonder, do you know what you're doing? In this legislation, do you know what you're doing? You've set up this trusteeship that is making decisions today and they have no authority under the Municipal Act to make decisions. Whether you know it or not, the act hasn't been passed. Your trusteeship is illegal. It has no authority under law. Under whose law do they have this power? Is it the divine right of kings? Under whose law do they have this power, since the act has not been passed?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I would like to read back into the record what the member for Lawrence said. He said: "I ask the minister a very simple question: Will you support my private member's resolution calling for a referendum...?" and I said no.

With respect to the trusteeship, this is not the first time this has happened. The last time this took place, where a municipality was directed not to sell assets or do anything improper, and where the act was put in place and made retroactive, was in 1994, put in place by the NDP in the city of Ottawa. This is not some revolutionary, brand-new event; this is something that happens in almost every set of circumstances surrounding a major amalgamation.



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## CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT OF POLICE

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is for the Attorney General. A coalition of over 25 community groups was formed in October of this year when your government appointed Rod McLeod to review the civilian oversight of policing in Ontario. The coalition believes that if the McLeod report recommendations are implemented, then Ontario will no longer have access to an independent civilian oversight body to ensure the integrity and accountability of the policing system in the province. In order to ensure a level playing field among the various groups concerned with policing, I am asking you today to agree to consult with those community groups on the McLeod report before amendments to the Police Services Act are introduced. Will you agree to meet and consult with these people before any amendments to the PSA are introduced?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** We have received Mr McLeod's report. We are considering Mr McLeod's report. I know that the Solicitor General has asked interested parties to provide him with their written critiques of the McLeod report. From my point of view, I'd be very interested in seeing that material as well. If people have recommendations to make and didn't avail themselves of the opportunity of speaking to Mr McLeod, we want to hear from them.

**Mr Hampton:** I got part of an answer; I didn't get the whole thing. The commitment people want is that the Attorney General will meet with them and discuss the recommendations of the report and will consider their views before any amendments to the Police Services Act are introduced.

They also ask another question. It's come to light that the police complaints commissioner himself issued some recommendations on civilian oversight of police. For some reason, the recommendations that came from the police complaints commissioner didn't get into the McLeod report at all.

I want to ask the minister again, will you commit to meeting with this coalition before any Police Services Act amendments are introduced and can you explain why the police complaints commissioner's model for civilian oversight of police was totally left out of the McLeod report?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** As I indicated in my first answer, I'd be delighted to receive written submissions about any observations they have about the McLeod report. Again, I can say that when a bill is introduced it will proceed through the Legislature, there will be hearings, people will have an opportunity to be heard.

In so far as the second part of your question is concerned, Mr McLeod did his report independently, Mr McLeod heard from those who wished to be heard and I suspect that Mr McLeod didn't agree with the police complaints commissioner's model and elected to accept something other than that.

## HIGHWAY 69

**Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** My question is for the Minister of Transportation. With any

luck, I hope to be driving home this evening. I'll be taking Highway 69 into my riding of Muskoka-Georgian Bay. As you're aware, Highway 69 is of great importance to the people in my riding. Many of the constituents have been asking me how the construction project's coming along. Can you inform my constituents how that project's coming along?

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I'd like to thank the member for Muskoka-Georgian Bay for the question. As the member will know, this government is refocusing taxpayers' dollars on rehabilitating our existing network of highways. We've added \$140 million to make sure that the job gets done.

I am aware that the section of Highway 69 that runs through the member's riding is a very much travelled highway, particularly in the summertime when approximately 15,000 cars travel that highway on a daily basis. Four-laning obviously will improve safety on this section of the highway, and that has the added benefit of enhancing this economic link, making it more convenient and cost-effective for residents and tourists, as well as commercial traffic. This government will continue to make the necessary investments on a priority basis in our highway infrastructure.

**Mr Grimmett:** Minister, I wonder if you could advise whether the project is intended to get as far as Mactier, and if so, how soon you expect the four-laning to reach Mactier.

**Hon Mr Palladini:** Although our priority is fixing what we already have, we have found the dollars to go ahead with a few expansion projects, such as four-laning of Highway 69, based on where the greatest need is. This summer we awarded a \$16.5-million contract for four-laning 8.5 kilometres north of Muskoka Road. This project will be completed by 1998. With respect to continuing on Highway 69 through the member's riding, by the year 2001 we will have spent \$60 million to complete 25 kilometres of the four-laning. I hope the member finds that very encouraging and that his constituents will be very happy with what this government is doing.

## PHYSICIAN SHORTAGE

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** My question is for the Minister of Health. We would like you to tell the House today what your intention is with the underserviced area program for areas around Ontario that do not have sufficient doctors' services.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** As the member opposite knows, the government has entered into a tentative agreement with the Ontario Medical Association, which is in the process of being ratified by both parties. The agreement calls for various incentives in terms of underserviced areas in the province of Ontario. There will be incentives to encourage doctors to go into underserviced areas. There will be disincentives for new doctors to go into overserviced areas, thereby directing them into underserviced areas. In addition, a group of some 20 physicians will be trained and designated particularly for underserviced areas; there will be extra moneys for training, which will guide ordinary doctors into underserviced areas.



**Mrs Pupatello:** I was looking for an answer to the question that relates to underserved areas because my area has yet to be designated. As the minister knows, you received complete files from our community, all the information in detail that you need to designate Essex county as an underserved region. You received that in October, October 11, to be exact. I remind the minister that we have a significant shortage of doctors: 30 family physicians and eight obstetricians short. The list goes on and on. The minister will know that he has all the information required. Will the minister today designate Essex county an underserved region?

**Hon David Johnson:** The ministry is committed to considering proposals from communities and the ministry is currently considering the Essex proposal. But I will say at the same time that the ministry, through the agreement with the Ontario Medical Association, has agreed to meet with the association in terms of overserved and underserved areas. The doctors have asked to have some input into this and the agreement we have made with them allows for that provision.

I will say that this ministry, this government, are not satisfied with the health services in the province. There are many good people working in the health system in the province but we feel that the health care system should be improved. We've committed to protecting the funding. We have committed to making the health care system better. We have committed to providing additional services in underserved areas.

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#### EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a question of the Minister of Finance.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Grey-Owen Sound, if the conversation's necessary, why don't we do it outside?

**Mr Wildman:** Thank you, Speaker.

We understand that the Minister of Education and Training will be making an announcement tomorrow, the day after the last day of this sitting, on transfer payments for education. Can the Minister of Finance assure the House that there will be no more cuts to schools, to school boards, to universities and colleges in that announcement?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** To the honourable member, I am not aware of any announcement that the Minister of Education is making tomorrow and I don't believe that the final decision with respect to transfer payments has been made.

**Mr Wildman:** We understand the announcement is imminent. The rumour is — the rumour may or may not be well founded — that there may be between \$600 million and \$1 billion in further cuts to school boards and that transfer payments to colleges and universities will be frozen.

Can the Minister of Finance confirm that the government will follow the recommendations of Dr Smith and the panel on post-secondary education, that the \$430

million this government has already cut from post-secondary education will be restored, that you won't freeze colleges' and universities' funding, and certainly that you will not make up for the loss in funding to colleges and universities by deregulating tuition fees?

**Hon Mr Eves:** I'm sure the Minister of Education will make announcements not only with respect to transfer payments to boards of education but also with respect to colleges and universities when he deems that to be appropriate. I obviously can't relay to the honourable member, and I'm sure he would appreciate that, decisions that are in the process of being made or that haven't been made yet.

#### WINE INDUSTRY

**Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South):** My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism and it's concerning the Ontario wine industry. As you know, this is a very proud and growing industry, especially in Niagara, with ambitious goals not only in Ontario but on the international market as well. The economic spinoffs for us in the Niagara Peninsula are certainly very significant throughout the peninsula, including Port Colborne, Fort Erie, Wainfleet and Stevensville. Could the minister tell the House about the spectacular growth and achievements of the Ontario wine industry over the past year?

**Hon William Saunderson (Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism):** I'm very pleased to respond to the member for Niagara South. Yes, it's very true that this is a very big industry in the Niagara Peninsula. There has been spectacular growth of the Ontario wine industry over the last decade, and I think we in Ontario should all be proud of this achievement.

Wine sales in the year just ending have grown by over 20%. They have been sold around the world. One of our specialty wines is the ice wine; in Japan that is one of the delicacies of cuisine there. There are 44 wineries in Ontario that employ 1,300 people — I'll say that again: 1,300 people — not only in manufacturing but also in the retail stores as well. We are selling about 83 million litres of wine in the period of 1995-96, and that's valued at \$675 million.

**Mr Hudak:** Thank you, Minister, for that answer. Not only as a member of Niagara am I concerned about the wine industry but also I'm a customer of the Niagara wine industry — maybe, around Christmas, a little too often. Not only from the Niagara area but throughout Ontario, how does the Ontario wine industry rate in worldwide competition?

**Hon Mr Saunderson:** I'm glad he asked that question, because we've had a very good success this year at the wine competitions. Our Ontario wineries were runaway winners in the international competition, which is somewhat like the wine Olympics, in London, England. There were entries from 38 countries, and Ontario companies won seven gold medals, 22 silver and 30 bronze medals.

In conclusion, I would urge all of us in this House to make sure that we have a good supply of Ontario wine, if needed, this Christmas season.



## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Two days ago, in response to a question from my leader, you confirmed that the province will legislate streamlined, one-tier municipal governments across the province, reducing the number of municipalities from 850 to as few as 200.

Last Wednesday, the regional council of Sudbury voted against your supercity idea and voted 12 to 8 to go to a modified two-tier governance model. Will you allow the region of Sudbury to stay with a modified two-tier model, or will you legislate and force the region to a one-tier model?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** Again, I'd just like to set the record straight. I don't know where the member opposite gets the numbers. I have never said that we would reduce the number of municipalities from 800 to 200 in this House or any place else. I just want the record to be very clear on that.

With respect to the structure of government in Sudbury, I recognize that they have been exploring restructuring for a number of years. The community was somewhat split. I know the city of Sudbury and the mayor of Sudbury were looking forward to a one-tier, but the region as a whole did debate it and they did have a vote. The vote was 12 to 8 in favour of a two-tier government and I respect that decision.

## PETITIONS

## SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** I am forwarding this petition on behalf of the students and families of St Timothy's school. Ms Teresa MacNeil was the one who gathered the petition, and it is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Minister of Education promised that cuts to education would not hurt the classroom;

"Whereas the cuts to education have resulted in many of our very young children being housed in inadequate, poorly ventilated portables;

"Whereas the children who are housed in portable classrooms that occupy crowded school yards are educationally at risk and their safety is in jeopardy;

"Whereas the current moratorium on capital expenditures makes it impossible for some school boards to provide safe, comfortable learning environments for our children, thus adversely affecting the quality of their education;

"Whereas the government of Ontario has proposed that \$250 million be spent on building a superjail while withholding funds for necessary school construction;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Remove the freeze on capital expenditures to ensure that our children are educated in buildings appropriate to and conducive of learning, comfort and safety."

I have hundreds of signatures on this petition and I sign my name and hope that the government will listen to them.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition from Paul Sharkey on behalf of members of OPSEU, Local 405. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Harris government has begun a process to open the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario; and

"Whereas this act is the single most important piece of legislation for working people since it is designed to protect our lives, safety and health while at work and allow us to return home to our families in the same condition in which we left; and

"Whereas the government has made it clear that they intend to water down the act and weaken the rights of workers under the law, including the right to know, the right to participate and especially the right to refuse; and

"Whereas this government has already watered down proper training of certified committee members;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario not to alter the Occupational Health and Safety Act nor erode the rights of workers any further and ensure strict enforcement of the legislation."

I add my name to theirs.

1450

## DRINKING AND DRIVING

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas 47% of all driving fatalities are alcohol-related; and

"Whereas 544 persons died in alcohol-related crashes in Ontario in 1994 (the most recent year for which statistics are available) and more than 25,500 drivers were charged with impaired driving in the same year; and

"Whereas 65% of the total convictions for drunk driving in 1994 involved repeat offenders; and

"Whereas every year drinking and driving costs Ontarians \$1.3 billion in personal financial loss, medical expenses and property damage; and

"Whereas the existing measures and penalties have failed to deter chronic impaired drivers from re-offending; and

"Whereas driving is a privilege, not a right, and chronic impaired drivers have failed to take their responsibilities seriously;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact Margaret Marland's private member's Bill 85, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act (Impaired Driving), 1996, or similar legislation, as soon as possible."

I am proud to add my name to this petition.

## NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.



"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I've affixed my signature to it.

### PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have further petitions from the members of CEP and SEIU.

"Whereas the Harris government will introduce legislation to amend the Workers' Compensation Act and distribute a discussion paper about changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act; and

"Whereas the expected changes include erosion of the right to refuse unsafe work; workers will be forced to apply to their employer for WCB benefits and employers will decide if the claim is valid; reduction in power of the joint health and safety committees; and eliminate compensation for certain injuries and diseases; and

"Whereas the Workers' Compensation Act is a vital protection for all workers in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Occupational Health and Safety Act has prevented untold numbers of accidents and saved thousands from illness and diseases;

"We, the undersigned, demand full public hearings throughout the province of Ontario on the Workers' Compensation Act proposed changes, and no changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, workers' right to refuse and joint health and safety committees."

I add my name to theirs.

### RETAIL STORE HOURS

**Mr Bob Wood (London South):** I have a petition signed by 94 people in the London area. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we are opposed to the opening of retail establishments on Boxing Day (December 26, 1996) we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To reconsider any changes to the laws that now cover the closure of retail establishments on Boxing Day."

### HOTEL DIEU HOSPITAL

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have a petition from a number of people in St Catharines. It reads as follows:

"To the government of Ontario:

"Since the Hotel Dieu Hospital has played and continues to play a vital role in the delivery of health care services in St Catharines and the Niagara region;

"Since Hotel Dieu has modified its role over the years as part of a rationalization of medical services in St Catharines and has assumed the position of a regional health care facility in such areas as kidney dialysis and oncology;

"Since the Niagara region is experiencing underfunding in the health care field and requires more medical services and not fewer services; and

"Since Niagara residents are required at present to travel outside of the Niagara region to receive many specialized services that could be provided in city hospitals and thereby not require local patients to make difficult and inconvenient trips down our highways to other centres; and

"Since the Niagara Hospital Restructuring Committee used a Toronto consulting firm to develop its recommendations and was forced to take into account a cut of \$40 million in funding for Niagara hospitals when carrying out its studies; and

"Since the population of the Niagara region is older than that in most areas of the province and more elderly people tend to require more hospital services;

"We, the undersigned, request that the government of Ontario keep the election commitment of Premier Mike Harris not to close hospitals in our province, and we call upon the Premier to reject any recommendation to close Hotel Dieu Hospital in St Catharines."

I agree with this petition and I sign this petition in agreement.

### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** This petition is from the Ontario Federation of Labour to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of workers for many years; and

"Whereas the centre and clinics have made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health and safety and the reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre, and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

I add my name to theirs.



## SCHOOL BOARDS

**Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington):** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, agree with and support the policies of the Ontario Conservative government. We, the students of Arthur District High School, respect the teaching position but we also feel that this position would be best protected by the immediate removal of school boards."

It's signed by quite a number of my constituents who are high school students, and I have affixed my signature as well.

## FONDS PROPRES POUR ÉCOLES

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott et Russell) :** «À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

«Attendu que les 218 élèves de l'école publique Nouvel Horizon de Hawkesbury vivent dans une école qui n'est pas convenable, qui est située sur un terrain d'un acre et qui n'appartient pas au conseil scolaire ;

«Attendu que l'école publique Nouvel Horizon a une très petite bibliothèque, pas de gymnase et des classes mobiles qui ne sont pas reliées à l'école ;

«Attendu que l'école publique Nouvel Horizon est la seule école publique de langue française du comté de Prescott, et que nous croyons qu'il est essentiel d'obtenir au moins une école de langue française pour les contribuables du secteur public français ;

«Nous, soussignés, faisons parvenir cette pétition afin que le financement pour l'achat d'un terrain et pour la construction d'une nouvelle école soit accordé tel que promis en 1994.»

J'y ajoute ma signature.

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** I've got a petition that's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads:

"Whereas the current" — it says Progressive Conservative government, but that's an oxymoron — "Progressive Conservative government of Ontario is proposing to amend the Workers' Compensation Act;

"Whereas the proposed amendments include cutting maximum benefits from 90% to 85% of net average earnings;

"Whereas the government is further proposing to outlaw workers' compensation benefits for chronic stress;

"Whereas the direct payment by employers to employees for the first four to six weeks of disability essentially amounts to privatizing a huge portion of WCB, giving employers total control and benefiting private insurance companies;

"Whereas the Occupational Disease Panel will be folded back into the WCB, therefore compromising their ability to do credible, independent work on establishing the cause of occupational diseases;

"Whereas employer assessments under the government's proposals will be cut by 5%, adding billions of dollars to the board's unfunded liability;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to hold full provincial public hearings on any proposed amendments to workers' compensation legislation to provide all the people of Ontario the opportunity for full disclosure of all proposed amendments and the ability and forum to ensure that all facts and potential impacts are heard and addressed."

That is signed by thousands of people from here in the province. I have affixed my signature to indicate my concern —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

1500

## SCHOOL PRAYERS

**Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk):** I have a petition entitled "Reinstate the Lord's Prayer in Ontario's Public Schools."

"The Grand Orange Lodge of Ontario West, being a firm supporter of the public school system and the Protestant faith, does, with the undersigned, hereby petition the government of Ontario to reinstate the Lord's Prayer in the public school system of Ontario.

"Equal rights to all people, special privileges to none."

I hereby affix my signature to this petition.

## PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** I have a petition here against the \$2 user fee for seniors. It reads:

"Whereas the Ministry of Health has started to charge seniors and social assistance recipients a \$2 user fee for each prescription filled; and

"Whereas seniors on a fixed income do not significantly benefit from the income tax savings created by this user fee copayment or from other non-health user fees; and

"Whereas the perceived savings to health care from the \$2 user fee will not compensate for the suffering and misery caused by this user fee or the painstaking task involved in filling out the application form; and

"Whereas the current Ontario Minister of Health" — of course it was Jim Wilson at the time —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Let's go.

**Mr Ruprecht:** — "promised as an opposition MPP" — Mr Speaker, I've got to be able to finish my petition. Why wouldn't I be able to get my petition done?

**The Speaker:** Petitions. The member for Hamilton Centre.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition to save the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"To Premier Harris and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, oppose any attempts to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"We demand that education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Work-



ers' Health and Safety Centre and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

I add my name to that.

### SCHOOL FACILITIES

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** I have another petition with well over 1,500 additional signatures on the Barrhaven High School issue, which reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the community of Barrhaven lacks any high schools to educate the large number of students living in this area;

"Whereas Barrhaven is the most rapidly growing community in Ottawa-Carleton;

"Whereas the National Capital Commission's greenbelt severs the community of Barrhaven from Nepean, forcing students to be bused from their community, wasting both time and money;

"Whereas St Pius X and St Paul high schools in Nepean have 36 portables on site;

"Whereas the Carleton Roman Catholic Separate School Board has undertaken significant cost-saving measures to help reduce the construction costs of its high schools;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We strongly urge the Minister of Education to recognize the urgent need for a Catholic high school in Barrhaven and to provide the funding required to build our school."

I have affixed my own signature thereto because I'm in complete agreement.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** One final petition. The member for Parkdale.

### PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** I was at the third paragraph.

"Whereas the perceived savings to health care from the \$2 user fee will not compensate for the suffering and misery caused by this user fee or the painstaking task involved in filling out the application form; and

"Whereas the current Ontario Minister of Health" — at that time it was Mr Wilson — "promised as an Ontario opposition MPP in a July 5 statement to Ontario pharmacists that his party would not endorse legislation that will punish patients to the detriment of health care in Ontario;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned Ontario residents, strongly urge the government of Ontario to repeal this user fee plan because the tax-saving user fee concept is not fair, sensitive or accessible to low-income or fixed-income seniors; and lest we forget, our province's seniors have paid their dues by collectively contributing to the social, economic, moral and political fabric of Canada."

I'm signing my John Henry.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### AGGREGATE AND PETROLEUM RESOURCES STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1996

#### LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES RESSOURCES EN AGRÉGATS ET LES RICHESSES PÉTROLIÈRES

Mr Hodgson moved third reading of the following bill:  
Bill 52, An Act to promote resource development, conservation and environmental protection through the streamlining of regulatory processes and the enhancement of compliance measures in the Aggregate and Petroleum Industries / Projet de loi 52, Loi visant à promouvoir la mise en valeur des ressources, la conservation ainsi que la protection de l'environnement en simplifiant les processus de réglementation et en renforçant les mesures de conformité dans l'industrie pétrolière et l'industrie des agrégats.

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines):** Amendments to the current statutes contained in the Aggregate and Petroleum Resources Statute Law Amendment Act will make the aggregate, petroleum and brine industries more accountable for meeting Ontario's environmental standards.

These measures will maintain Ontario's leadership in regulating these industries and improve the ministry's enforcement capability to ensure compliance. They will also make the industries more accountable for their day-to-day operations and allow the ministry to concentrate on its core business of standards development, technical approvals and enforcement.

The bill implements a new, streamlined approach that is backed by detailed technical standards. These new standards will have input from key stakeholders and interest groups and will be adopted in regulation following a 30-day public review period through the Environmental Bill of Rights registry.

This legislation has been thoroughly reviewed by the standing committee on general government, and I'd like to thank all the committee members. The dialogue between the government and the opposition was of tremendous benefit and improvements to this bill have been made.

For example, the bill now contains a provision requiring that annual compliance reports be sent to the upper- and lower-tier municipalities, as well as the ministry. In addition —

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** Thank you. That was my amendment.

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** I already gave the opposition credit for the amendment.

**Ms Martel:** I know.

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** You'll get to speak and further elaborate on that.

In addition, where annual compliance reports are not submitted on time, or an operator does not take appropriate steps to remedy non-compliance, the operator's licence for a site is automatically suspended.

I would like to thank the opposition parties for proposing these changes.

The government made changes to the bill in committee to strengthen provisions for compliance reporting. Several housekeeping amendments were also made based on suggestions from the industries. This initiative enjoys strong support among the client industries and makes better use of taxpayers' dollars. Ministry inspectors will be freed from time-consuming financial and administrative duties and will be able to focus their efforts on compliance. There will be improved enforcement of the standards and regulations. The industries will have more responsibility and will be held accountable for meeting environmental standards.

As we have said throughout the discussion on this bill, the approach we are taking addresses both the economic and the environmental perspectives and represents a true balance of all interests.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Comments or questions? Further debate?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have some comments to make on this bill on issues that may be a bit peripheral to the bill perhaps. I'm going to try, because you're in the chair and an excellent Chair, to keep those remarks as close to the bill as possible, but you know you always have to look at the total context in which a bill comes before this House.

I know there are some who've expressed concern about this bill, which deals with the Ministry of Natural Resources aggregate and petroleum resources act. There are some who say the bill has some redeeming features. The bill, as members of the House may know, revises four statutes: The Aggregate Resources Act, the Petroleum Resources Act, the Mining Act and the Ontario Energy Board Act. So it has some rather significant ramifications for this province.

Bill 52, in our view, is part of the government's wider effort to shift responsibility for direct program delivery from the government, which is impartial and independent, to industry, which cannot be considered to be impartial and independent.

Similar to the Crown Forest Sustainability Act and the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations' recently introduced Safety and Consumer Statutes Administration Act, the bill proposes that the province's aggregate and petroleum industries now be responsible for the day-to-day site inspections and monitoring, with the government's role restricted to establishing minimum standards and issuing permits and enforcement. The bill will also allow the government to use private inspectors. These of course would have to be certified by the ministry. These changes were tested in two pilot projects last year, one in Uxbridge.

Now I have a bit of concern about this because I think the government, when it had these responsibilities, could look upon this situation in an independent fashion. There are some people who have said that what the government is doing in many instances such as this is putting the fox in charge of the henhouse, and there's a lot of concern about that. If you're asking industry to police itself and there's not an independent body to do so, some industries that choose to break the law may gain an economic advantage while other industries that want to be good corporate citizens and comply with the laws and the

standards and regulations will be at an economic disadvantage. That's why it's important to have what we referred to as a level playing field. I believe that a level playing field exists only when the government, as an independent inspecting unit, is in the paramount position and that you not simply hand the keys to the car over to the people who are in the industry itself.

1510

While I hope it works — I hope it does; I'm not a person who wishes ill on these situations — I certainly believe it has a good chance of not being as fair as the other system. Of course we know the reason for this. This saves the government money and the government is looking for every last penny it can find to finance the tax cut, which will be a 30% cut in provincial income tax with the greatest advantage going to the richest people in our society.

The member for St Andrew-St Patrick rose in the House today to extol the virtues of the tax cut. I know there was applause in the boardrooms of the major corporations where the chief executive officers would be getting perhaps hundreds of thousands of dollars in money returned from the government. I could hear the clinking of the champagne glasses in the Albany Club and other significant establishments where rich people tend to congregate as she stated this.

But you would know, Mr Speaker, and as I once said in this House, being an individual who's worked at the municipal level and knows the importance of frugality and of not borrowing money when you don't have to, the government will have to spend, that is, borrow, some \$5 billion a year to finance this tax cut, and of course will have to make some drastic cuts in its expenditures in many communities.

In my community, for instance, the Hotel Dieu Hospital is now under the meat axe of the provincial government. In Port Colborne, I read a column from my friend the member for what used to be called Erie, now Niagara South, where he said he was going to fight with the government over the closing of the Port Colborne hospital. I'm pleased he's joining my battle in the Niagara region to preserve health care and I want to say that we will stand shoulder-to-shoulder, no doubt, with the people of our communities, preventing the provincial government from closing our hospitals, the three, in St Catharines and Niagara-on-the-Lake and Port Colborne. I am pleased; I've got a copy of that column which I'll be happy to provide to any who call my constituency office and want a copy.

That's the member's role locally, to do that, and of course we will get some information from others who will be pleased. In all these situations the winners are going to agree with it; the losers do not agree with it. So when they complain that the member for Port Colborne or the member for St Catharines uses statistics provided by the Port Colborne hospital or the Hotel Dieu Hospital, do they really expect that the other hospitals that have dodged the bullet are going to disagree with the recommendations? Of course they will not. That's why he and I will be proud to utilize information provided by the hospital in his constituency and mine.



The reason I bring this up is because I think the government in this bill is trying to shed its responsibility so that it can cut its provincial budget. I think the taxpayers of this province who are getting a good service here, a service which protected the environment, will not get as good a service now, though I wish for the best, I don't wish ill on the government over this particular change. I think we could see that change coming.

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener):** You've forgotten about VLTs.

**Mr Bradley:** Did I forget about VLTs? I can't think of how I could possibly bring VLTs into this bill without challenging the Speaker to perhaps bring down a difficult hand on me, but let me say this: The government is trying to save money in this because it doesn't want its inspectors, it wants the industry to inspect itself, and that can be indeed tied back to the fact they need the money for the tax cut. Of course the other reason, the other thing they're doing is they're putting VLTs in to finance it, video lottery terminals — I want you to join with me — video lottery terminals, electronic slot machines which will be placed in every bar, in every restaurant, on every street in every neighbourhood in Ontario. I know the members are happy I mentioned that. I hope they don't put them in Mitchell or in Stratford, a wonderful community. I've been to Stratford and Mitchell and Monkton and communities such as that throughout your constituency. It's a lovely part of the province and you've extolled the virtues of your community here in one of your recent contributions to the House. I want to congratulate you on extolling the virtues of a community that deserves the extolling of its virtues.

While the industry associations were consulted during the drafting of the bill, others were not included. Does that sound familiar? Yes, it does. I was reading in the *Globe and Mail* the other day, a source this government wishes to quote on many occasions, particularly editorially, when some of its editorials are a little right of Genghis Khan in their viewpoints. I looked at this and said, "The government is doing the same thing with the change of standards." You see, in this case they consulted the industry associations and asked, "Is it okay if we make these changes, and what changes should we make?" Once they got the thumbs up or thumbs down from the industry associations, then they went to environmental and public interest groups and asked, "What do you think now?" I think their mind had been made up by then.

They're doing the same thing in the Ministry of Environment now, where the Minister of Environment is going to change standards, something that's relatively routine. They're trying to make a big deal out of it. The former NDP Minister of Environment and Energy is here this afternoon. He knows that routinely we work on standards. This government is not even going to develop its own standards; it's simply going to try to adopt standards from somewhere else so it doesn't have to do its own work and tailor these standards to the special conditions of Ontario.

It's going to go to the industry first and ask: "Is this okay? You people have been polluting in this area. You produce these contaminants. Is it okay if we make these standards stricter?" I can tell you what the answer's going

to be. Some of them are not going to be happy with the potential standards. They want to clear them with the polluting industries first and then come to the public and environmental groups. Industry should be consulted, absolutely, as it should have been consulted on this bill. It's essential that this be done. But it's as important to consult others at exactly the same time, not okay it, give it the thumbs up from the industry first and then turn around and say to the environmental groups and public citizens' groups, "Here's what we've decided upon." You come forward with the proposal and you let everybody comment, and then whatever decision you make you have to live with. I understand that. I might disagree with it, but at least you can say that everybody had an equal chance. That wasn't the case with the MNR aggregate and petroleum resources act. They consulted the industries first, got their input, drew up their proposals and then consulted somebody else after, which is not the proper way to go.

The government has stated its intention to pass this bill before presenting any draft regulations. Minister Hodgson has promised that all interested groups will be consulted on the regulations before they're implemented. I don't know whether someone might be able to help me out.

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr Bradley:** They have not developed those regulations yet. We have not seen them. What all of us in this House should know is that it's not simply the legislation, it's not simply what's contained in the bill that counts; it's what's in the regulations. That's often the very key part of it because that's the specific detail. You can make some sweeping statements. You can have some statements within a piece of legislation that will make everybody feel good. They'll say, "This looks great." Then you put in regulations that change the bill's interpretation to a certain extent and the fact is that we don't get a chance in this House to debate regulations.

There is a regulations committee of this House that nobody in the news media covers. It's hard enough to get them into the gallery here, with the television sets they have in their offices, but they certainly are not going to come down to the various committees to give coverage, particularly the regulations committee, so what happens is that only the cabinet and perhaps some of the other government members get a chance to look at and deal with these regulations in any meaningful way. By the time they get to the regulations committee, I can assure you the government has its mind made up.

We think it's important that there be considerable consultation before the regulations are developed. Then, when the draft regulations are out, we think it's important that they go to everyone at once to look at and for the government to make any modifications it deems appropriate, and we in the opposition will be helpful in suggesting what some of those changes might be. I have a sneaking suspicion the government might not adopt some of the changes that we would want to see adopted.

#### **1520**

The provincial aggregates policy group, with representation from industry, environment and municipalities, did begin discussing this legislation and possible standards for the first time in late May of this year, I think it was.



Only limited progress has been made thus far. Additional meetings happened in the fall and perhaps there are going to be further meetings.

I'm concerned about this, because I look at it in the context of the government's overall policy, which is to deregulate anything that could possibly provide protection for consumers and the general public of this province. It's an effort to get rid of civil servants. I know it's popular out there to say civil servants are lazy or they don't do their job or something like that, but over the years they have done an excellent job. They have been dedicated individuals who have performed, on an independent and objective basis, a very important role in protecting the environment, whether they happen to be in the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of Environment or any other ministry. That's why I become concerned when you turn that all over to the industry, because they do not have a vested interest, as the general public might have, in the protection of the environment, though many in the industries will have that concern. The point I make is that you just don't have a level playing field unless you have an objective, detached, independent observer and inspector in the form of people from the various government departments that are relevant.

The changes: New technical standards will be created to regulate the province's aggregate industry. Apparently MNR staff are only in the initial stages of the standards, according to this very important note I have before me.

Similar to the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, an aggregates trust fund will be established to pool annual licence fees and provide for rehabilitation where permits have been revoked as a result of bankruptcy or default. The fund will be administered by the industry.

I think the idea of the fund is a good idea. I want to say that. I don't want to say everything about the bill is negative. This fund is a good idea, and that the funding be obtained from the industry itself I think is reasonable as well.

The new standards for the petroleum and brine industries, the changes to this regulation, I think are something that should be observed carefully. New standards will be developed to regulate the industry. These will be based on the Canadian Standards Association standard for hydrocarbon storage. A new trust fund, again funded by industry, will pay for the continued operation of the geological core and chip library, which provides information and research services to the industry and academic institutions. Maximum fines for offences under the Petroleum Resources Act are increased from \$10,000 to \$500,000, and the time period for initiating a prosecution is extended. The annual production and rig licences will be replaced by a life-cycle well licence covering the entire lifespan of a well.

Those fines may sound like a lot of money, but you have to know whether the government is going to seek the highest penalty. If the government is tame in prosecuting — first of all, if it decides to prosecute, and when you have fewer people in government to do the prosecutions, you're going to have a greater problem being able to prosecute when necessary. That's what is happening, because if you look at the Ministry of Environment, they're cutting their budget by hundreds of thousands of dollars. They're taking away the resources.

Do you know what happens in these ministries that I don't think a lot of people realize? Because of the bumping provisions, people who work in specific areas are lost. Let us use as an example someone who might be working in the regulation of the petroleum and brine industries or the aggregate industry. That person may have been there for five or 10 years and have a particular expertise in that field, but someone with more seniority is able to bump that person out of the position, so often you lose that person. The problem is, the government is so obsessed with slashing people left and right — they would like to get about 25,000 people out of there if they could — that they're moving so quickly and so rapidly that these changes are disruptive.

It comes back to a theme that I think many in the public are talking about today, which is that even those who agree with the government in its general policy say the government is moving too quickly and too drastically and is not looking at the ramifications of the decisions that are being made. I agree with those people. I don't agree with the government agenda in any event, and a lot of people don't. But even people who are Conservatives come to me, because I have a lot of good friends who are Conservatives. I think some of them might even vote for me once in a while. I respect their point of view very much. They come to me and say, "I can't believe the government is borrowing money to give a tax cut, \$5 billion a year for a tax cut." And I'm getting calls all the time from people who are saying, "I can't believe the government is cutting inspectors for the aggregate industry." I have a volume of telephone calls, something to behold, at my constituency office over this matter.

They don't even touch, however, the number of calls I'm getting on the potential closing of Hotel Dieu Hospital in St Catharines. People are very concerned that the so-called restructuring commission — I call them the hospital closing commission — have abandoned Hotel Dieu Hospital. They had a consultant from Toronto come in to do an evaluation. The people I know in Moncton, Ontario, and in Listowel and places like that must wonder whether all the expertise in the world resides in consulting firms emanating from Toronto. Somehow I don't think that's what they believe to be true.

But here we have the government taking \$38 million out of hospital budgets in the Niagara region, and then the local restructuring commission is forced to face what I call crackpot reality. That's what it is; it's crackpot realism they're dealing with. I don't accept the fact that you have to take \$38 million out of the hospital budgets in the Niagara region, so I start from that premise. Unfortunately, the restructuring commission has to take that into account.

I digress from the bill, and the parliamentary assistant looks on with a puzzled look at how this could possibly be part of this bill, but I know he wanted me to put this on the record this afternoon.

So when I look at the fines — I was on the fines — I think \$1 million as the maximum fine would be reasonable. The Ministry of Environment and Energy could put people in jail for violating these laws, because do you know who doesn't have to worry about this? Good people in that industry. Good, dedicated corporate citizens in the



industry don't worry about that, because they spend the money on care of their companies, on training people environmentally, putting in the appropriate equipment, changing processes. They have established a policy that calls for maximum care of the products with which they deal. So they don't care if it goes up to \$1 million, and they don't care if the time period for initiating prosecution is extended, because they're not going to break the law. It's only those who have an eye to breaking the law who are going to be concerned about any of these changes.

I was concerned when I heard about this bill that what we've seen happen is some questionable decisions being made, and it's again why I'm worried about the government.

1530

This is dated March 18, 1996. It's a hearing officer's report on the proposed Niagara Escarpment plan amendment PG/101/93. It says, "Harold Sutherland Construction Ltd," and then it says, "As we discussed by telephone today, enclosed is a copy of the hearing officer's report on proposed amendment 101 to the Niagara Escarpment plan. The hearing office recommends that the proposed amendment be refused.

"The Niagara Escarpment Commission will be considering the hearing officer's report at its April 11, 1996, meeting. The commission will then send its recommendation on the proposed amendment to the Minister of Environment and Energy.

"Subsequent steps in the amendment process are as follows:

"(a) The minister makes a recommendation on the proposed amendment to the cabinet. If that recommendation differs from the hearing officer's recommendation, public notice is given and a 21-day comment period is provided for written representations to cabinet.

"(b) Cabinet may approve, approve with modifications, or refuse the amendment."

This is signed by a planner in plan administration. This is pretty routine, this is not secret information, it is information that the Niagara Escarpment Commission would have to provide.

What happened with this operation on the escarpment was the following.

The Sutherland application came to the Niagara Escarpment Commission to amend the Niagara Escarpment plan to allow an asphalt plant within the escarpment. In 1991 Sutherland constructed the asphalt plant at the East Linton site in Sarawak township. Sutherland built this plant without receiving the proper approvals from the Ministry of the Environment. This is where I get into the problem with this legislation. Here is a situation where even with some staff a problem arose. Now, without the staff, you know that the problem's going to be multiplied ten times. Let me go through this chronology again.

In 1992 Sutherland Construction and Harold Sutherland were each charged with establishing a plant without a certificate of approval, operating the plant without the certificate and creating an adverse impact on the environment. The company, Sutherland Construction, was convicted of the first two charges and fined \$10,000. All other charges were withdrawn.

Sutherland did receive a certificate of approval in 1993, but numerous complaints were subsequently received from area residents regarding noise, dust and odour emissions at this location. As an example, the Ministry of Environment and Energy recorded 150 such complaints in the summer of 1993.

In 1993 Sutherland applied to move this plant to the new location in Keppel township where Sutherland has an existing quarry. The staff of the NEC recommended against approval of this application on the basis that this applicant had operated his plant so poorly in East Linton and because the Niagara Escarpment staff felt that the Keppel site was not an appropriate location. However, in 1994 the commission rejected their own staff's recommendation and approved the amendment.

Public hearings on this application were held in 1995. Numerous citizens in the area of the proposed new plant opposed this application on the basis of concerns regarding dust, noise and odour, as well as the applicant's very poor track record in operating similar plants. There were some complaints then that did exist.

The hearing officer concluded that this application should be rejected primarily because it does not comply with many of the objectives of the Niagara Escarpment Act because it would set a precedent throughout the escarpment area. The hearing officer's report was made on February 23, 1996.

In July of this year, not that long ago, the former Minister of Environment and Energy, Ms Elliott, the member for Guelph, issued her recommendation in support of the Sutherland application. The minister's recommendation to the cabinet to approve this application went directly against the hearing officer's recommendations — directly against them.

In early November 1996, this past month, the current Minister of Environment and Energy also recommended to cabinet that this application be approved, and cabinet issued its order in council on November 6, 1996. On November 21, 1996, the Niagara Escarpment Commission issued a conditionally approved development permit to Harold Sutherland Construction. So ends this portion of this saga.

But what I'm pointing out is how important, because some of the aggregate industries are here — I just received a note here that's rather interesting. I've lost my train of thought with this note, which is designed to disrupt this House, Mr Speaker. It claims that 19 MPPs are being held hostage by somebody in this House. I don't know who that would be. I thought we were here till midnight tonight, or 6 o'clock — something like that.

Anyway, I wanted to put that on the record so the parliamentary assistant would be aware of this circumstance and the concern of neighbours in that area, because some of the quarrying operations in this province take place on the escarpment; that's how I tied this in to the this particular piece of legislation. While I don't think the world will end with this piece of legislation, I just don't believe for a moment that you can have industry policing itself. You've got to have an independent body. The best one is the representative of the people of this province, and that is the government of Ontario.

There was a rather interesting article written that all members of the House should know about, because it fits



into the role of government in this bill or any other bill. It was written by Charles Caccia, who is the MP for Davenport, and is called "Bashing Government Hurts Us All." What I see in this bill is the bashing of government. I want to share its contents with members; it will only take a couple of minutes to do so. Mr Caccia writes as follows:

"We live in times when denigrating government is fashionable, when government is seen by some as unnecessary, redundant, wasteful if not corrupt and downright stupid. Politicians like Newt Gingrich, Preston Manning, Ralph Klein and Mike Harris have done their share of the demolition of government, and may have managed to convince some Canadians of the evils of government, 'useless bureaucracies' and, horror of horrors, 'duplication and overlap' (rarely supported by precise examples).

"Canadians have listened to these claims, but don't seem entirely convinced, if one is to judge from the re-election of incumbent governments in British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that critics of government have managed to weaken the public's confidence in our public institutions.

"Some media outlets have played a role in this weakening process in a variety of ways: strident headlines unsupported by the content of the article; sensational reporting of events oblivious to the larger context; a short historical memory; rare admissions of errors, usually relegated to a correction on page 39; opinion-driven rather than fact-driven reporting; and, recently, the emergence of new media owners with a strong belief that government is a burden, an inconvenience, a distant tyrant with an unquenchable thirst for the tax dollars of hard-working citizens. In reality, however, international tax comparisons show Canada ranks in the middle among OECD countries."

I don't know who he was making reference to as media owners, but it might perhaps have been Conrad Black, who now owns 52, I believe, of 104 newspapers in Canada and certainly seems to be changing the complexion of some newspapers with which I am very familiar, because I notice a difference in the tone and the composition, and certainly the columnists. We have the wife of Conrad Black, Barbara Amiel, now in the *St Catharines Standard*, along with Andrew Coyne, again no raving socialist, to be sure.

The reason this fits in with this bill is that what you're doing, I say to the parliamentary assistant, is denigrating those who have served in government in this capacity and wanting to toss them out and have the industry police itself.

He goes on to say:

"The central issue is: Without strong government, who would look after the public interest? Who would ensure safety in the air and on the highways for millions of travellers? Who would ensure the orderly marketing of milk, eggs, wheat and other agri-products so as to protect consumers and producers from the vagaries of the marketplace? Who would organize and provide education for all? Who would run public libraries? Would fire trucks arrive at our homes within minutes of the alarm? The list goes on: Who will provide export development

money for private sector entrepreneurs? Who would allocate billions of dollars to defence-oriented industries? Who would provide fast tax writeoffs for mining and oil industries? Who would pay for, organize and run embassies and consular services for Canadians abroad? Who would ensure social stability by giving fishermen economic assistance during the moratorium on cod fishing?

"And what about a broadcasting network, coast to coast, in two official languages? And old age pensions, guaranteed income supplements, social housing, clean drinking water, lead-free gasoline, safe workplaces, police protection, health care and electricity?

"Let's hope the antigovernment message will turn out to be a short-lived phenomenon, bringing an end to an era in which the advancement of the civil society seems to have weakened.

"Canadians, I believe, value the greater public good. Business and labour pursue, and understandably so, their sectoral interests. It is for government to pursue what we generally call the public interest, the *res publica* of the ancient Romans, a concept that embodies, in just two words, the values we hold dear as citizens, as members of the society, as people in pursuit of large, just goals that we know we can't pursue as individuals.

"To pretend we can erode government and governance with impunity may be convenient to some. But the price to be paid would be high, in the form of social unrest, polarization and inequity. While a few would gain, many would lose. And in the end, we would all lose what binds us together: the commitment to the public good and its pursuit, one of the defining features of Canadian society."

I couldn't have said it better myself. The man is obviously a better intellect than I, a very thoughtful individual.

1540

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I disagree.

**Mr Bradley:** The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing disagrees. I appreciate his compliment.

The reason I brought this within this legislation is that it's again part of the idea of withdrawing government from areas where government probably should be — not all areas by any means. Some of the changes that governments have made over the years and that this government is going to make or is making are going to be justified. I think we have to observe that and watch it carefully. Some will be justified.

I don't think the changes contemplated in this bill are justified, because you're withdrawing independent, objective, detached individuals with some detailed knowledge of the area from many of the areas they were involved with before in dealing with these industries. While I hope what you're doing will work out all right, because I know there are many in the industry who are careful, who do care about the environment, the problem is that this is not going to allow you to capture those who are prepared to break the laws of the province, to not spend the money on environmental improvements, to not spend the money on training of employees, to not develop a code of practice and a code of operation, which is essential for the betterment of this province.



I wanted to offer just a few words on this legislation this afternoon. I'll cut short my planned —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Bradley:** I hear calls for more. I don't want to disappoint the members of the Legislature, but there are Christmas cards to be completed yet and there is shopping to be done. I know that you would all want to do that.

I wanted to give time to the member for Brampton South to be able to get to his seat so he could get up and challenge all of the views that I have presented this afternoon.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments? Further debate?

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** No, no, questions or comments, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm sorry, but I didn't see you in your seat in time for that. I'm calling for further debate. The Chair recognizes the member for Sudbury East.

**Ms Martel:** The Speaker has obviously made a decision that he wants to be out of here today. I had every intention of speaking for the full 90 minutes.

*Interjection.*

**Ms Martel:** I thought the members would like that. I was not going to go that long, but in light of what just happened I really think I might.

In any event, I'm glad that the parliamentary assistant and some of the staff are here because there are some points I want to make with respect to this particular piece of legislation. I was pleased to be a part of the committee that had some public hearings, short though they were, part of the committee that went through some amendments. In fact, some of the opposition amendments were indeed accepted, which was a better situation than I had dealing with Bill 82. But I won't go into that.

I want to make some remarks, though, on behalf of the NDP with respect to this bill. First of all, the stated intent of Bill 52, as put forward by the ministry, is to streamline regulatory processes, transfer some areas of program delivery to the industries and allow the industries to be responsible for day-to-day inspections and monitoring so as to allow MNR to concentrate on auditing and enforcement. That's the stated intent of the bill, and it's the line that the government members have repeated throughout the debate on this particular bill and through the clause-by-clause and through the public hearings.

The fact is that this bill really has to be seen within the context of any number of other pieces of legislation this government is putting forward; that is, in order to finance the 30% tax break, to give to those who have the most in Ontario even more, this particular bill is designed to have any number of people within the ministry laid off and the savings from their layoff and the savings from offloading current ministry responsibilities on to the industry to then be given to the Treasurer to finance the tax cut.

That's what's at the root of the changes the ministry proposed in Bill 52. That's what's at the heart of the changes that are now going to happen around an industry that was once regulated by MNR staff and will now, as a matter of fact, be self-monitored, self-policed, self-enforced by the industry itself.

With respect to this particular minister, some 2,000 Ministry of Natural Resources staff, if they have not already received layoff notices, are going to by the end of fiscal 1997. Fully 20% of all the people who are getting laid off from the public service by this government in the next two years are coming from this ministry. I think that's shameful for a ministry that is so important in terms of monitoring compliance not only with respect to the aggregate industry, which is the focus of this bill, but with respect to game and fish, with respect to forestry; that a ministry whose staff has a paramount responsibility to protect and sustain resources for the benefit of all Ontarians — that this same minister would be so eager, so very eager, to offer up so many staff to be kicked out the door.

Fully 20%, I repeat, of all the staff who are being laid off across the government for the next two years are coming from this particular ministry. That means, at the end of the day, that the important role those staffers undertook to protect the natural resources in this province — resources, I remind you, that belong to all the people of this province — is going to be undermined.

I say that because we all know that while there are some very good operators across this province, be it in the aggregates sector, be it in the forestry sector, the fact is that you will always have those operators who think it's more important to make a fast buck than it is to protect the environment and to protect the resource for future use, for future generations.

What you're going to have because of the offloading of programs on to the industry and because of all of those ministry staff going out the door from the Ministry of Natural Resources over the next two years is a scenario in which so many of those bad operators who are only interested in making a quick buck are going to take on the environment and are going to ensure that we have a serious environmental disaster in this province the likes of which we have not seen and the likes of which this government will be completely responsible for because of the staff they have thrown out the door, because of the staff who used to undertake these very important protection activities.

That is what is really at the heart of this bill; that's what the bill is all about and that's why it came forward. It is a bill which facilitates all those staff going out the door and many of the programs in the aggregates sector that are delivered by MNR now are being shifted over to, offloaded on to the private sector, along with any number of ministry jobs that used to go with delivering those same services.

1550

The bill in a general sense is really just enabling legislation, and the fact of the matter is that the bill we have dealt with in this House and in committee and during the clause-by-clause really is only a shell. Huge and very significant and important sections of the bill are being taken out and will be put into the regulations at a later date.

Members in the House should know that whole process is quite contrary to a process that the minister, when he was on this side of the House, argued about when our government dealt with the Crown Forest Sustainability



Act. At that time the member who is now the minister argued very fiercely that we should not move forward with a proposal, with a bill that was only a shell and that the committee itself dealing with the forest sustainability act had a right to see all the technical standards, all the documentation that was going to lead to the development of the regulations. He argued very ferociously about that at the time.

What I found so contradictory was that when it came to this bill, a piece of legislation he is responsible for, that same process, that same procedure, that same principle did not stand. Repeatedly, members of the opposition throughout the debate on second reading, during the hearings process and during the clause-by-clause asked for the technical standards that were being developed in association with this bill, asked for some right to be involved in the development of the regulation process.

What was so interesting was that we found out quite by accident during the course of the public hearings that work was going on in the ministry right now to develop the technical documents. We had a representative from the petroleum industry who came before the committee one day to talk about his support for the bill and he accidentally mentioned that industry representatives were at that point already involved in working groups with the Ministry of Natural Resources in no less than six areas to develop the technical standards which would accompany this bill.

It was a real shame that the government saw fit to have working groups working with industry to develop the technical standards at the same time they were dealing with the bill, but the government, through the minister, did not see fit to actually give that information to the committee. I regret that. I think that's a bad process. It's certainly a process that the minister, when he was a member in opposition, did not appreciate and did not accept. It would have given the whole process some more credibility if we could have seen the work that was already going on at the same time we were trying to deal with the bill.

But that also followed on what became clear during the public hearings: that the government itself had really not consulted with anyone but industry representatives in the drafting of Bill 52. I say again that's a really unacceptable position for the government to have put itself into, especially because the Ministry of Natural Resources itself has its own aggregates working group in place, has had since at least 1992 a group in place to provide input and advice to the minister on legislation regarding the aggregates industry in the province.

What became clear during the course of the public hearings was that the government saw fit only to consult with the industry representatives about this bill. The government did not consult with the environmental groups, which are part and parcel of the aggregates working group; did not consult with the municipalities, which are part and parcel of the working group; did not consult even with some of the consultants, who were part and parcel of the working group — a group of folks who on their own time, not being paid per diems, doing it voluntarily, have over a number of years tried to provide

the minister with good advice about how to regulate this industry.

It was really shameful to discover that the minister for whatever reason — I don't know what it is, I can't accept it — refused to even talk to those other groups about the details of this bill before the bill was actually presented in the Legislature.

I just want to read into the record some of the comments of some of the people who were involved on the working group, who were really quite frustrated and quite disturbed about the fact that they saw this bill on the same day it was introduced in this House.

The first was Carol Seglins. She is the mayor of Caledon. She was also part of the aggregates working group and has been for some time. I remind members that this aggregates working group is a creation of the Ministry of Natural Resources. She said the following: "[W]e do have some concerns, and one of the concerns is the very little opportunity for public input and little review from stakeholders. As a working group that has been working on this since June 1992, we were stunned to find that the bill was presented to us as a fait accompli on our desks at a meeting, with no opportunity for any input. So not only have we not had public input, but not from stakeholders either."

Glenn Harrington is also a member of the minister's Aggregate Resource Working Group. He represents the Conservation Council of Ontario. I asked him, during the questions and answers portion of the time he was at the committee for the public hearing, how long he had been a member of the Aggregate Resource Working Group. He replied: "Since its inception. Before that, I was a member of the steering committee." I asked him: "Are you in the same position as Mayor Seglins was in, in that all of a sudden you saw the bill in the form it was going to be presented and that was the sum total of your participation in it?" He said, "Absolutely, along with everybody else." Except we know that there was another group that saw the bill and was involved heavily in its drafting, and that happened to be the aggregate producers themselves.

Two comments from other people who were also very concerned about the lack of input: one, Valerie Cranmer from Valerie Cranmer and Associates. She was a member of the aggregates working group as well. I asked her if she had been part of that group. She said: "Yes." I said: "Can I ask you when you first saw a copy of this bill?" She replied: "After it was presented. The members of the committee were not aware of it being prepared until it came out." I asked her how she felt about her lack of participation in the drafting of this bill when she had given so many hours of her free time to provide advice to the minister about how to regulate this industry, and she said, "Actually, the whole committee was extremely upset with the way that it happened and we requested a meeting with the minister to clarify the role of the committee, because we felt that with the discussions and the stakeholders that were sitting around the table, it was very appropriate for that committee to at least be aware of what was happening with the legislation."

Finally, comments from the regional municipality of Niagara, which presented a very important and very good brief to us. This is a group of people who have been



involved in working with aggregate operators for a number of years. "Mr Corwin Cambray: With the changes to the bill, as it says in our report at the beginning, we had no input to the changes before the bill came out, and there was a concern that there was no input. We understand that the Aggregate Producers' Association of Ontario did have input, but municipalities had no input."

Municipalities had no input, environmental groups had no input, consultants who work with operators around these issues had no input. The only group that the minister consulted with were the aggregate producers. If you want to put together a bill that's going to protect the environment, going to protect the interests of those who are concerned about environmental protection, you can't just talk to the producers about that. You have to deal with people like the people on the working group, who for a number of years have provided their input for free to the minister about how to regulate the industry. I think it's a real shame that the Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines did not see fit to talk to the very people who on other occasions he is quite prepared to have work for free for him to get advice from about how to regulate this industry.

I say to the parliamentary assistant, who is here, some of us were given a commitment at the public hearings that we were going to have some input around the regulation-making process itself. Even though the aggregates working group had met with the minister and asked him for direct input by their group in the development of the regulations, the minister said no to that too. The minister said that the aggregates working group could see the regulations after they had already been drafted.

I don't know why the minister won't try to correct the first mistake he made, which was to not consult with these folks at all. It seems to me that if he's really concerned about getting their input, if he's concerned about putting together some regulations that are going to respond to a number of concerns, not just the industry concerns, he has to be prepared to allow his own aggregates working group to participate in the development of the regs, not to see them after the fact, which is what happened when they saw the bill after the fact.

1600

I would encourage the parliamentary assistant, who is here today, to again raise that issue with the minister. We certainly tried when the minister was before his committee, but I think the minister could do himself a lot of good right now if he were to involve those people at the beginning of the process rather than asking them to rubber-stamp something when it's all over and done.

I want to deal with some of the specific concerns we had with the legislation, concerns that at the end of the day have not been rectified. There are a number of them.

First of all is with respect to the definition of "inspector." This may seem to be a small point to a number of members, but in the current act that we operate under it makes it very clear that "The minister may designate in writing any employee of the ministry as an inspector for the purposes of this act." As the current acts operate, anyone who is an inspector is a crown employee, they are directly accountable back to the minister, and the government is then held directly accountable for any action that

may or may not be taken with respect to protection of the environment or enforcement of the law for operators who are operating under these acts.

The change the government made was to say that "The minister may designate in writing any person as an inspector for the purposes of this act," not only, as the parliamentary assistant told us on one occasion, to allow an MTO employee to deal with wayside permits, but now it's very clear that with respect to the aggregates act, any person can be designated by the minister to carry out any functions of the act. I think that's wrong for two reasons.

I think it's ridiculous that we have to lay off MNR staff to help finance the tax break at the same time we're going to give employ to someone else in the private sector for doing the same job. There is no net increase in the province in terms of job creation. There is no net increase in terms of money that's circulating in the economy when you do that. To lay a ministry staff person off in order to appoint someone from the private sector makes no sense whatsoever. It certainly, in my opinion, doesn't allow for the same kind of accountability you have when that person is a public servant.

I'm also very concerned that what we set ourselves up for is for someone from the industry itself to then be responsible for enforcement of his or her own industry. I don't know why the government wants to get itself into that position. Why do you want to be in the position of being accused of having someone from the industry not only self-monitor, self-regulate, but then self-police? That's exactly what's going to happen, given the wording that the government put forward and passed when this bill was dealt with.

We are now going to be in a position where someone from the industry itself can act as an inspector, can go out and inspect sites of their colleagues, and will be responsible for policing what's going on at those sites. I don't think that does the public any good. I don't think it does this government any good to put itself in a position where you're going to have inspectors who may well be from the industry policing some of their colleagues. It does not give people any comfort that at the end of the day environmental protection is going to be the number one priority and that their concerns are going to be responded to. But the government would not make a change in this particular section, and I regret that they wouldn't.

Second is with respect to the aggregate resources trust. Currently the collection of a number of fees the ministry disburses, moneys for the abandoned pits and quarries rehabilitation fund, are from that fund. All of those moneys and all of those responsibilities are now going to be transferred over to the aggregate resources trust, and the trust itself will be responsible for rehabilitation and research on rehabilitation.

I agree with that. That is an important thing to do. It was done already at the Ministry of Mines, started by the Liberals in 1990, carried on when both my colleague from Lake Nipigon and I were there. A trust was established to deal with rehabilitation. The difference between that and what the government has proposed is that we thought it was appropriate that a crown employee again have responsibility for making the decisions with respect



to the disbursements from the fund, what projects for rehabilitation would be considered and would be funded. We thought it was appropriate that the crown assume that responsibility because it gave a sense to the public that the government was accountable if something went wrong or if decisions were made that were not good for the environment.

Again, the government felt it was better that they offload that responsibility on to the private sector. You are going to see staff from the Ministry of Natural Resources lose their job doing the work they are now doing gathering this money together and providing disbursements for rehabilitation, and you're going to see someone from the private sector hired to do that. No net gain in employment, no net gain in economic wealth in the province. I don't understand what the rationale is to do that kind of thing. You're not going to save a job. In fact, one person is going to lose theirs so that someone from the private sector can gain. I don't think that makes any sense at all. I don't think it provides for the same sense of accountability. I don't think it provides for the same mechanism for accountability that the public really thinks should be in place on these kinds of resource issues.

I also tried to move at the same time that we establish a multistakeholder committee that would be responsible for making decisions about disbursements of funds for rehabilitation, because what I am concerned about and what I was concerned about during the committee process is that the trustee of the fund would be someone from the industry whose only responsibility was going to be back to the industry, not to environmental groups, not to municipalities, which also have an important stake in how rehabilitation of these sites is undertaken. I moved a motion that would have put into the bill a change that a multistakeholder committee, not just a trustee all on his or her own, would be responsible for making decisions about rehabilitation, and that committee would broadly represent all of the interests that are involved in aggregate production and rehabilitation in the province. That was defeated as well.

However, I gather from the parliamentary assistant that there will be some kind of board of directors that will be involved in the administration of the funds, and I would say to the parliamentary assistant that I certainly look to him to ensure that the composition of that particular board will indeed reflect not only interests from the industry but also interests from the environmental communities and from municipalities as well, all of whom have a great and important stake in this issue.

Thirdly, our main concern, and this is really at the heart of the bill, is that of replacing the annual site inspection by Ministry of Natural Resources staff with an annual compliance report. This new report will replace the inspections that used to be carried out by MNR employees, and this new report will be sent in to the ministry and will outline, operator by operator, site by site, what their site looks like, what kind of measures they have to take to remedy anything that might be wrong on the site and what the time frame is that we've put in place to take that remedial action.

The reason I disagree with this is because it represents a fundamental shift from the work that the ministry now

undertakes, and that fundamental shift is that inspectors were onsite in some of the 27,000 licensed sites in this province to monitor compliance, to ensure that if remedial action had to take place it would. They gave a sense to the public that there was some work being done to ensure that work going on in quarries was being carried out with respect to whatever the site plan had been that had been put in place and whatever conditions had been on the licence.

Certainly the government tried to argue that even with the reduced number of staff they would have a change in their responsibilities and this particular change would allow ministry staff, those who were left, to in fact go after the bad apples. I say to the members who are here today, I wish that it were going to be so, but the fact of the matter is that we know the government has about 32 inspectors in place for the fiscal year 1996-97. That's down from what they used to have. We couldn't get a number beyond that, even though we do know that the ministry has a number of other cuts to make.

The enforcement officers themselves sent a brief to the committee and said that clearly two years from now the number of inspectors would go from about 41 to 16. I strongly believe that with 16 inspectors left in the province of Ontario to try to monitor compliance for 2,700 sites, because they are going to have to take a look at the annual compliance report and follow up and ensure there is compliance, there won't even be enough of them left to seriously deal with the bad apples, with the operators who have no interest other than making a quick buck at the expense of the environment.

Sooner or later in the province, on a quarry or in a pit, there's going to be someone who totally flaunts the rules, who totally disregards the rules, who then, because they want to take shortcuts, affects the water quality, affects the water table, affects the flow of water, causes an accident with a school bus or does any number of other things because they are trying to cut costs. That will come back to haunt this government, because it will be your fault, because you thought it was more appropriate to lay off staff in order to finance the tax cut than you did to ensure that there would be staff available to deal with particularly the people who are only interested in flaunting the rules.

I firmly believe that is what's going to happen. We heard from a number of presenters at the public hearings who expressed concern about the current situation, who said that already there were not enough staff to ensure that operators in their area did what they were told, followed the development agreement that had been put in place.

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We heard some very powerful stories from people who had had no end of problems with operators who just wanted to flaunt the law. What the government is setting itself up for by moving from an annual inspection by MNR inspectors to an annual review by the operators themselves, which they have to forward into MNR, is an environmental problem which is going to be very significant, which is going to cause serious environmental damage that I hope at the end of the day does not seriously involve people being hurt as well.



This is the heart of all of our concern and it is the area where I think not only with this bill but also with the changes we saw in the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, where the government offloads its responsibility on to industry, where the government tells industry to police itself, sooner or later the resources that you have a mandate to protect are going to be used in an inappropriate way that will cost all of us a great deal in the long term.

We also had a concern about aggregate permits being issued in perpetuity and we moved an amendment in this section to say that every five years an operator trying to get an aggregate permit would have to reapply for that. The government voted against that, of course, again, because if they allow an operator to continue to have a licence that doesn't have to be renewed, then the government doesn't have to have the staff in place to carry on the administrative functions which require that licence to be renewed.

Again, you see that the tax cut is really at the heart of why the changes are being made. In the first year this bill goes into effect, in phase 1, some \$900,000 will be saved, in the second year some \$2.6 million. It's around changes like this and on the backs of these MNR employees that those cuts are going to be made. The resource belongs to all the people in the province. It is completely inappropriate that this government would allow aggregate permit holders to continue to have licences without having to reapply, without having to give some kind of information to the ministry on a five-year basis or a 10-year basis.

The resource belongs to the people in the province, not to the aggregate holders, and it would have been a small, small change indeed for the ministry to make to say: "Yes, in fact we recognize resources belong to everyone. We are not going to let a permit holder have that licence in perpetuity. We are going to make sure that every five years or every 10 years he or she has to renew that licence. We can see what's going on, we can check what's going on and we can make a decision at that point whether or not to allow that resource extraction to continue in the hands of that operator."

Our fifth concern, and I raised this at the beginning, was how much of the details of the act that's now in place now go into regulation. Indeed, Bill 52 is a shell. The problem with that is that some very important sections that now appear in the current act are being taken out and we don't know what's going to replace them. We don't know what's going to replace them because we haven't seen the regulations yet and we don't know how strong or weak they will be and, frankly, we won't be able to participate in the process. They will be done at cabinet, cabinet will review them, they will be stamped order in council, the LG will sign his or her name to them, and that will be the sum participation of the members of the committee in that process.

Second, I have always believed that regulations do not have the same force of law as the wording in the act does. By taking out very significant portions of this act and moving them into the regs, I think you weaken overall the bill and the protection that has been in place in the bill with respect to the aggregate industry, the protection of the environment with respect to how that industry operates.

I just want to give the members some idea of what has been taken out. For example, all of the details for a site plan for a class A aggregate licence have been taken out of the bill where they currently appear and will go into regulation. All of the details for the report which accompanies the application for a class A licence have been taken out of the current act and will be developed in the regulations. All of the notification process outlined for operators applying for a licence have been taken out of the current legislation and will be developed at some point in the regulations. All of the details for a site plan accompanying an application for a wayside permit have been taken out of the current act and will be developed in the regulations. All of the details for a site plan accompanying an application for an aggregate permit have come out of this bill and will be dealt with in the regulations.

We did not see the regulations, of course, during the committee process. We were assured by the parliamentary assistant that they were going to start to be developed some time in November. Since I haven't been notified that the process is under way, I assume that it is not. I really fear that we are making the entire act much weaker because so many of the important provisions that are now in place which outline the responsibilities of the operators will no longer appear in the act but will appear in the regulations at some point in time, whenever they are developed. That is the wrong way for the government to go with respect to this act. The general public believes that what is in the act is much stronger in terms of force of law and is very concerned that regulations can be changed with the stroke of a pen, at any point in time, by any government. That does not afford to the public the same type of protection as you would if all of the details appeared in the act.

I regret that the government decided to move in that way and I certainly hope, given that the parliamentary assistant is here this afternoon, that he will guarantee again to the members in this House that it will be a broad base of stakeholders who will be involved in the development of the regs, certainly broader than the people who were responsible and who were spoken to in the development of the bill, who were only the producers themselves.

Any number of notification processes were also taken out of the act and moved into the regulations. The same concerns I raised with some of the details around licences apply here, some of the examples. The minister used to have to provide a copy of an application for a licence and the accompanying documents from the operator to the municipality or the county that operation was in. Now the notification that's going to occur will be developed in the regs.

The minister used to have to provide a licensee and a municipality with conditions that the minister wanted to apply aggregate licence for review and comment, and now the minister will have the discretion to advise the municipalities of a change in the site plan amendment if he or she wants to do that.

The minister used to have to provide an amendment to the site plan by the ministry or by the licensee to an adjacent municipality, an affected municipality, for comment or review, and now the minister has the discretion to send the proposed amendments to the municipality.



Before, the minister had to advise affected municipalities of a transfer of an aggregate licence, and now that responsibility will be undertaken by the licensee, the person to whom the licence was transferred; it's no longer a ministry responsibility.

The minister currently, upon issuing a wayside permit, has to send a copy to the affected municipality, but now it's the licensee, the person receiving the permit, who will have to advise the municipality.

Finally, when an operator applies for a licence for a pit and quarry in an unorganized area there's a whole notification process outlined in the act to advise residents in unorganized areas. That whole section has been repealed by the government and we are told that all of that notification process will now be developed and appear in the regulations. I don't think that makes a whole lot of sense, because my concern is that with the changes that occurred in the act the minister has offloaded his responsibility for notification and now put that upon an operator. There is no mechanism to check to determine whether or not that operator is complying with what he or she is supposed to do.

I believe that the minister should continue to assume some responsibility about the changes that are being made to licences or permits or to transfers. That's a ministry responsibility. That should remain a ministry function. You should not offload that on to licensees or permittees and hope that they notify in the way they're supposed to.

I am very worried about the changes that have been made with respect to taking out the notification process for people who live in unorganized communities. I have a number of unorganized communities in my area. They would argue that the current notification process is not enough as it currently stands in the bill. I worry that as we take that out of the bill, as the government did, and develop that process in regulations, their voice and how they participate in the process will be weakened even further. That will cause a lot of problems for this government if it has to start dealing with people in unorganized areas who feel they have no access, no way and no right to participate when an operator is trying to operate in an area close to them.

Finally, because I recognize that the Lieutenant Governor is due in here in about 10 minutes to give passage to a number of bills, I want to end in two ways. First of all, this bill follows from any number of any other bills that the government has introduced, or any number of other policy changes, which at the end of the day, in the opinion of our party, weaken protection of the environment.

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Some of the other examples are all the cuts that have been made to the Niagara Escarpment Commission; the repeal of the ban on incinerators; the elimination of blue box funding; the elimination of the Ontario Round Table on Environment and Economy; the elimination of the MISA Advisory Committee on environmental standards; the elimination of the Environmental Assessment Advisory Committee; the end of the Intervenor Funding Project Act; the changes to the Land Use Planning and Protection Act; cuts to MOEE staff; cuts to MNR staff; cuts in the

order of 70% to conservation authorities; the changes which have been made by this minister to the Public Lands Act and the Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act which eliminate permits needed for dredging, which eliminate permits needed to build docks and boat-houses on public waterways, which eliminate the need for a permit to drill or move heavy equipment or blast and strip overburden from land by mineral exploration companies.

Again and again we have seen this government in the last 18 months move to cut funds to programs that were in place to provide environmental protection. We've seen this government move to change legislation, to weaken some of the protection we had in law to ensure that protection of our resources would be paramount for this government and for any other government that comes after.

I regret that because I think where this government will find itself sooner or later is in a position where some operator, be it a forestry company, be it in the aggregates sector, decides it's far more important to make a quick and fast buck, and will cut corners and will then produce an environmental problem which will be very serious and very significant, that may well harm not only water or lakes or the air, but end up harming people.

I don't know why the government wants to put itself in that position. I believe the role of any government, and I believe the role of this government should revolve around being the stewards of natural resources in Ontario. It's a role you should take very seriously, but what I see in this bill is an offloading of that responsibility, an offloading of the staff by in essence throwing them out the door and having industry police itself in many ways that at the end of the day will come back to haunt this government.

As I conclude, there was one presenter who probably said it the best. It was a presenter who came before this committee and had a very difficult time in expressing himself, but it was a presenter whose family and he himself had no end of trouble with an operator currently operating beside their house. He expressed to the committee his tremendous concern that even now, under the current circumstances, they had great difficulty in trying to get the development agreement enforced. What would it be like when the industry was left to regulate itself?

Mr Cummins said the following: "I hope I can somehow put a human face to this debate, because the anguish this industry has caused us and our community is very great. I really wish to draw on that experience and share with you our concerns, because the present regime that we have is not working. My concern with Bill 52 is that it devolves even more power to the industry. It does not protect the interests of people like me and other residents of communities all across this province.... I understand that the government is proposing to streamline the regulation under Bill 52. To me, streamlining the process for approval gives the unscrupulous operators free rein and it is that experience that I wish to draw upon, because we live right next door to an unscrupulous operator. I can tell you, it's not a pleasant experience. I think it's this particular type of operator the public needs



to be protected from, and I don't believe Bill 52 in its present form protects us in that regard."

In closing I say to the parliamentary assistant that was probably the most powerful and most poignant of the speeches we heard, and I believe Mr Cummins and I agree with Mr Cummins because I think the changes you have made will make it that much easier for those unscrupulous operators to try and flaunt the law, to try and disregard the law, to try and cut costs at the expense of the environment, and at the end of the day all of us are going to pay for that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Questions or comments?

**Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie):** I'd like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues for their participation in this debate. I'd like to particularly thank the member for Sudbury East and express my appreciation as well to the member for Algoma-Manitoulin for the Liberal Party who participated throughout the course of the hearings.

Even more importantly, I'd like to take this opportunity to express appreciation to the members of the public who participated in a very meaningful way in the hearings around this bill. What I fail to understand are the comments by the member for Sudbury East, who expressed concern about the fact that people didn't have an opportunity to make contribution or to have input. The member read from Hansard about people who expressed concern about not having input, and yet it was in the very process of having input. That is how this process works.

Just in closing, I would like to say that this bill is not about self-policing, it is not about self-regulation; it is about self-administration. It is not about offloading; it is about partnership between the government and the private sector. In the final analysis, we believe that this bill is in the best interests of the people of Ontario. It is in the best interests of ensuring the sustainability of natural resources in the province.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** I too support the bill, but more importantly, I would like to do what I do every year at this time, and that is to extend my personal greetings to all of my colleagues in this place and, on behalf of all of us, to thank the people who work in the legislative precinct. In particular, we take for granted our security staff, our staff at the table in this chamber and the other people who work in this chamber, and the legislative staff as a whole. It is very true that none of us does our job solely and we cannot do it without the staff throughout our whole organization. It is with great pleasure that I wish everyone a very blessed Christmas and happiness and health in the new year, 1997.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** And prosperity.

**Mrs Marland:** While I'm trying to do this, I'm enjoying the interjections from my dear friend, my colleague who isn't even in his seat. I guess he's really enjoying this interlude.

I know that everybody shares with me our appreciation for the support we have. We cannot do our jobs alone or even with our own immediate staff who are in our direct employ, so thank you to everyone who makes our job easier. Our success as parliamentarians, no matter where

we sit in this chamber, depends on that support, and it's only with that support that we are able to serve the people of this province, which it is our privilege to do.

**Mr John L. Parker (York East):** Mr Speaker, I see that we are not adhering to the rotation this afternoon, so I will take advantage of this opportunity simply to point out to my friend opposite that she referred to someone flaunting the law. I think she meant flouting the law. I offer that comment on her remarks.

Apart from that, I wish to echo the sentiments and the remarks of my celebrated and sainted colleague the member for Mississauga South. Merry Christmas to all. God bless us, every one.

**Mr Bradley:** I want to say to the member for Sudbury East in this little response, because there's been some reference made to it, that this is a law which certainly this government would not want to flaunt in all good conscience. I think she would agree with me on that. While there may be some flouting the law, as the member points out, no one on the government side, at the end of its term, should be flaunting this law.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mr Hodgson moves third reading of Bill 52. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Resolve that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Orders of the day.

**Mr Frank Sheehan (Lincoln):** Mr Speakers, orders number 63 through 71.  
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#### CITY OF BRAMPTON ACT, 1996

Mr Hastings, on behalf of Mr Clement, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr31, An Act respecting the City of Brampton.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Hastings, on behalf of Mr Clement, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr31, An Act respecting the City of Brampton.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

#### OTTAWA CIVIC HOSPITAL ACT, 1996

Mr Bradley, on behalf of Mr Patten, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr35, An Act respecting the Ottawa Civic Hospital.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Bradley, on behalf of Mr Patten, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr35, An Act respecting the Ottawa Civic Hospital.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.



ASSOCIATION OF  
ARCHITECTURAL TECHNOLOGISTS  
OF ONTARIO ACT, 1996

Mr Hastings moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr40, An Act respecting the Association of Architectural Technologists of Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Hastings moved third reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr40, An Act respecting the Association of Architectural Technologists of Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

CITY OF TORONTO ACT, 1996

Mr Baird, on behalf of Ms Bassett, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr66, An Act respecting the City of Toronto.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Baird, on behalf of Ms Bassett, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr66, An Act respecting the City of Toronto.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

ONTARIO PLUMBING INSPECTORS  
ASSOCIATION INC. ACT, 1996

Mr Bradley, on behalf of Mr Cleary, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr67, An Act respecting the Ontario Plumbing Inspectors Association Inc.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Bradley, on behalf of Mr Cleary, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr67, An Act respecting the Ontario Plumbing Inspectors Association Inc.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

HURONIA AIRPORT COMMISSION ACT, 1996

Mr Grimmett moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr68, An Act respecting the Huronia Airport Commission.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Grimmett moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr68, An Act respecting the Huronia Airport Commission.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

CITIES OF KITCHENER  
AND WATERLOO ACT, 1996

Mr Leadston moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr71, An Act respecting the City of Kitchener and the City of Waterloo.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Leadston moved third reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr71, An Act respecting the City of Kitchener and the City of Waterloo.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

UNIVERSITY OF ST JEROME'S  
COLLEGE ACT, 1996

Mr Wettlaufer moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr72, An Act respecting the University of St Jerome's College.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Wettlaufer moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr72, An Act respecting the University of St Jerome's College.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

I resolve that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

WINDSOR UTILITIES COMMISSION ACT, 1996

Mr Bradley, on behalf of Mrs Pupatello, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr76, An Act respecting the Windsor Utilities Commission and the supply of heat energy within the City of Windsor.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Bradley, on behalf of Mrs Pupatello, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr76, An Act respecting the Windsor Utilities Commission and the supply of heat energy within the City of Windsor.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

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ROYAL ASSENT  
SANCTION ROYALE

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** His Honour awaits to give royal assent.



*His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario entered the chamber of the Legislative Assembly and took his seat upon the throne.*

**Hon Henry N.R. Jackman (Lieutenant Governor):** Please be seated.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** May it please Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly of the province has, at its present meeting thereof, passed certain bills to which, in the name of and on behalf of the said Legislative Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees (Ms Deborah Deller):** The following are the titles of the bills to which Your Honour's assent is prayed:

Bill 52, An Act to promote resource development, conservation and environmental protection through the streamlining of regulatory processes and the enhancement of compliance measures in the Aggregate and Petroleum Industries / *Projet de loi 52, Loi visant à promouvoir la mise en valeur des ressources, la conservation ainsi que la protection de l'environnement en simplifiant les processus de réglementation et en renforçant les mesures de conformité dans l'industrie pétrolière et l'industrie des agrégats*

Bill 82, An Act to establish the Family Responsibility Office, protect the interests of children and spouses through the strict enforcement of support orders while offering flexibility to responsible payors and make consequential amendments to certain statutes / *Projet de loi 82, Loi créant le Bureau des obligations familiales, visant à protéger les intérêts des enfants et des conjoints grâce à l'exécution rigoureuse des ordonnances alimentaires tout en offrant une certaine souplesse aux payeurs responsables, et apportant des modifications corrélatives à des lois*

Bill 86, An Act to provide for better local government by updating and streamlining the Municipal Elections Act, the Municipal Act and related statutes / *Projet de loi 86, Loi prévoyant l'amélioration des administrations locales en modernisant et simplifiant la Loi sur les élections municipales, la Loi sur les municipalités et d'autres lois connexes*

Bill 92, An Act to promote road safety by implementing a safety rating system for commercial carriers and other measures to encourage compliance with and improve enforcement of Ontario's road safety laws and to amend various Acts administered by or affecting the Ministry of Transportation / *Projet de loi 92, Loi visant à promouvoir la sécurité routière par la mise en oeuvre d'un programme de cotes de sécurité pour les véhicules de transport utilitaires et d'autres mesures conçues pour favoriser l'observation et améliorer l'application des lois de l'Ontario portant sur la sécurité routière et modifiant diverses lois dont l'application relève du ministère des Transports ou qui le concernent*

Bill 95, An Act to permit shopping on Boxing Day by amending the Retail Business Holidays Act and the Employment Standards Act / *Projet de loi 95, Loi visant à permettre l'ouverture des magasins le lendemain de Noël en modifiant la Loi sur les jours fériés dans le commerce de détail et la Loi sur les normes d'emploi*

Bill Pr31, An Act respecting the City of Brampton  
Bill Pr35, An Act respecting the Ottawa Civic Hospital  
Bill Pr40, An Act respecting the Association of Architectural Technologists of Ontario

Bill Pr66, An Act respecting the City of Toronto  
Bill Pr67, An Act respecting the Ontario Plumbing Inspectors Association Inc.

Bill Pr68, An Act respecting the Huronia Airport Commission

Bill Pr71, An Act respecting the City of Kitchener and the City of Waterloo

Bill Pr72, An Act respecting the University of St Jerome's College

Bill Pr76, An Act respecting the Windsor Utilities Commission and the supply of heat energy within the City of Windsor.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** In Her Majesty's name, the Honourable Lieutenant Governor doth assent to these bills.

Au nom de Sa Majesté, Son Honneur le lieutenant-gouverneur sanctionne ces projets de loi.

*His Honour was then pleased to retire.*

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** Mr Speaker, I have a motion to move. Before I do that, I wonder if I might just say a few words first of all to you, sir: how much we have, I believe on all sides of the House, respected not only your office but you and the way you've conducted yourself upon your election as Speaker and offer congratulations for difficult attempts to bring order to all of us who are not always silent when we're supposed to be silent. Those of us on this side of the House learned from the master, perhaps we all did, but we respect very much the difficult task you have and we congratulate you and thank you and want to wish you and your family season's greetings and all the best.

I'd like to say to the table officers our very best wishes, our thanks for looking after us throughout what's been a very busy session. We thank you for your counsel, for your advice and for your assistance. We suggest to you that as we reflect on 1996 we're going to need you perhaps even more in 1997, for those who had planned January or February holidays or time to do other things, but we thank you for your commitment when it's required on behalf of this Legislature, and that means the people of Ontario. We say to you and your families many thanks for 1996 and best wishes for 1997 and the holiday season as well.

All those at Hansard who look after us in all capacities, we thank you. I'm sure some members from time to time thank you for not hearing some things, but we thank you —

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** "On the other hand."

**Hon Mr Harris:** On the other hand, the record is the record.

We thank you very much, the officers, all those who have given us assistance, the pages, those who look after us and serve us. The pages wanted very much to be at school this week, I'm told, and are not here at this particular time, but we thank them as well.

I say to all members of the Legislature, and I hope you'll relay to your staff as well, our sincere thanks on behalf of the people of Ontario for your assistance in making sure that legislation gets proper debate and proper



scrutiny. From time to time after question period we on this side of the House don't always feel that way, but as we reflect back on 1996, we've all been in that role. We appreciate that, we understand that.

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We also understand the demands that are on elected officials, particularly at the senior levels of government, and therefore on your families. We all face this. We all have spouses and children who from time to time are asked why their spouses or fathers or mothers are doing certain things. Unfortunately, that's part of life.

Might I thank you and say I look forward to a very equally as productive 1997 as we've had in 1996. While we'll disagree on some policy areas, perhaps in modest ways, from time to time, I think we all accept that we were elected to do our very best for the people of this province, for today and for tomorrow, and we all come here in that spirit. As we enter into a time of thankfulness and blessings for what we in Ontario and in Canada have been blessed with, I thank you for that commitment. I thank your families. I wish you all season's greetings at this time.

I'm sorry the time off is not as long as it might have been. I'm the first to acknowledge that when we're not in this Legislature it's not time off; what it means is that when we're in this Legislature we're on double duty, in our constituencies and ridings and here as well. So I'm particularly pleased, when we asked for the session to come back, we had the support from all members of the House, all parties, who recognized that we had important business to proceed with.

To all of you, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and season's greetings.

**Mr Wildman:** On behalf of our caucus, I would like to add my best wishes to all the staff who serve this assembly and to express our thanks for their assistance, and to the table officers and to you, Speaker, and to all members of the Legislative Assembly best wishes for a happy and safe holiday, and to say that one of the greatest achievements this government seems to have achieved this last session was not only having us leave now for a happy holiday, but declaring that spring starts on January 13.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Very quickly, I want to echo the good wishes that have been made on behalf of the other two political parties, and to say on behalf of the Liberal caucus that I extend to all members of the Legislature our very best wishes for a happy holiday season, whatever holiday you happen to be celebrating, whether it's Christmas or Hanukkah or any other holiday people might be celebrating at this time of year, and wish you the best in the year ahead.

I know that members of the public who watch this from time to time think that members of the Legislature perhaps dislike one another intensely. What we do in this House is we debate ideas, we debate issues, we debate policies, we debate legislation, but all of us have a great respect for one another and believe that each person who is elected to this House is endeavouring to do the best job possible for the people of the province of Ontario.

To all the staff who assist us in many ways, and the Premier has enumerated those individuals, has listed those people for the people who are watching today and for

those of us in the assembly, I thank you very much and wish you the very best in the year ahead. We look forward with anticipation to the new session, and I will not make any political comments at this time.

To you, Mr Speaker, congratulations on the fine job you have done as our Speaker, ruling in ways both the government and the opposition find both pleasing and annoying. That means you're doing an excellent job if on some days you're annoying the government and on some days you're annoying the opposition. Very best wishes to you and your family as well.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** To the members of the House, I'd just like to make a quick, brief comment, but considering I haven't spoken in this place since October 3, "brief" may be a definitional point that I disagree with.

I'd like to thank you all, first off for myself. It was a rather difficult situation we found ourselves in, I understand. I appreciate the fact you supported me. I'd like to recognize the member for Mississauga South right now. She has been both effective and I think helpful, very helpful, and I greatly appreciate that in the last couple of months.

To the members of the House, I've not found an unreasonable member here, particularly when it comes to rulings and discussing things outside of this House. The people who do watch I think believe there is some deep-seated war that goes on in this place and outside, and it really comes to them as a surprise to realize that outside of this place many of us get along, go out and have a very good relationship. It's probably something that isn't known and should be known more often. It is ideas that we debate in here.

To the table clerks: I would like to thank you. It would have been impossible to do this job had I not had the experience and guidance of a group of people I think are often overlooked and make this place run so effectively sometimes. It wouldn't happen if it weren't for the people who are sitting in front of me now.

To the Premier, the leaders of the two parties, the House leaders and the whips and all members, I wish you all a very Merry Christmas, happy holidays. I will echo the member for St Catharines: If I've left anything out, I apologize in advance, but I'm sure the vacation will be well worth it. I look forward to coming back in January. It will be fun, I'm sure, and I will just remind you on those days of these kind words you said about me, because I may need to. Merry Christmas, happy holidays.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I should also just like to put on the record that His Honour gave his last nod in this place — I think — his last royal nod. I believe that is the case, unless everything we want to do is passed in the first week of January and we adjourn right away. We will all have the pleasure of welcoming the new Lieutenant Governor later on in January, to which you are all welcome, of course.

I move that this House now adjourn.

**The Speaker:** The Premier has moved that this House now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock on January 13.

*The House adjourned at 1657.*







**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO  
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

**Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Lt Col The Hon / L'hon Henry N.R. Jackman CM, KStJ, BA, LLB, LLD**

**Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell**

**Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers**

**Senior Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Journals / Greffier adjoint principal et Greffier des journaux: Alex D. McFedries**

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees / Greffière adjointe et Greffière des comités: Deborah Deller**

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Agostino, Dominic	Hamilton East / -Est	L	
Arnott, Ted	Wellington	PC	
Baird, John R.	Nepean	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre du Travail
Barrett, Toby	Norfolk	PC	
Bartolucci, Rick	Sudbury	L	
Bassett, Isabel	St Andrew-St Patrick	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, deputy government House leader / adjointe parlementaire du ministre des Finances, chef parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Beaubien, Marcel	Lambton	PC	parliamentary assistant (rural affairs) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Affaires rurales) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Bisson, Gilles	Cochrane South / -Sud	ND	deputy New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Boushy, Dave	Sarnia	PC	
Boyd, Marion	London Centre / -Centre	ND	
Bradley, James J.	St Catharines	L	deputy opposition leader, opposition House leader / chef adjoint de l'opposition, chef parlementaire de l'opposition
Brown, Jim	Scarborough West / -Ouest	PC	
Brown, Michael A.	Algoma-Manitoulin	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Caplan, Elinor	Oriole	L	chief opposition whip / whip en chef de l'opposition
Carr, Gary	Oakville South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / adjoint parlementaire du solliciteur général et du ministre des Services correctionnels
Carroll, Jack	Chatham-Kent	PC	
Castrilli, Annamarie	Downsview	L	
Chiarelli, Robert	Ottawa West / -Ouest	L	
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre / -Centre	ND	
Chudleigh, Ted	Halton North / -Nord	PC	
Churley, Marilyn	Riverdale	ND	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législativ
Cleary, John C.	Cornwall	L	
Clement, Tony	Brampton South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Colle, Mike	Oakwood	L	
Conway, Sean G.	Renfrew North / -Nord	L	
Cooke, David S.	Windsor-Riverside	ND	
Cordiano, Joseph	Lawrence	L	
Crozier, Bruce	Essex South / -Sud	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne	London North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Curling, Alvin	Scarborough North / -Nord	L	
Danford, Harry	Hastings-Peterborough	PC	parliamentary assistant (agriculture and food) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire (secteurs Agriculture et Alimentation) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales



Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
DeFaria, Carl	Mississauga East / -Est	PC	
Doyle, Ed	Wentworth East / -Est	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Duncan, Dwight	Windsor-Walkerville	L	
<b>Ecker, Hon /</b> <b>L'hon Janet</b>	Durham West / -Ouest	PC	Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Elliott, Brenda	Guelph	PC	
<b>Eves, Hon /</b> <b>L'hon Ernie L.</b>	Parry Sound	PC	Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances
Fisher, Barbara	Bruce	PC	
Flaherty, Jim	Durham Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Ford, Douglas B.	Etobicoke-Humber	PC	
Fox, Gary	Prince Edward-Lennox- South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox- Hastings-Sud	PC	
Froese, Tom	St Catharines-Brock	PC	
Galt, Doug	Northumberland	PC	parliamentary assistant (environment) to the Minister of Environment and Energy / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Environnement) de la ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Gerretsen, John	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	L	
Gilchrist, Steve	Scarborough East / -Est	PC	
Grandmaître, Bernard	Ottawa East / -Est	L	
Gravelle, Michael	Port Arthur	L	
Grimmett, Bill	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	PC	parliamentary assistant (tourism) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Tourisme) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Guzzo, Garry J.	Ottawa-Rideau	PC	parliamentary assistant (energy) to the Minister of Environment and Energy / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Énergie) de la ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Hampton, Howard	Rainy River	ND	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie	Oxford	PC	parliamentary assistant (municipal affairs – rural) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur rural) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Harnick, Hon /</b> <b>L'hon Charles</b>	Willowdale	PC	Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
<b>Harris, Hon /</b> <b>L'hon Michael D.</b>	Nipissing	PC	Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Hastings, John	Etobicoke-Rexdale	PC	
<b>Hodgson, Hon /</b> <b>L'hon Chris</b>	Victoria-Haliburton	PC	Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hoy, Pat	Essex-Kent	L	
Hudak, Tim	Niagara South / -Sud	PC	
<b>Jackson, Hon /</b> <b>L'hon Cameron</b>	Burlington South / -Sud	PC	Minister without Portfolio (Seniors Issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (affaires des personnes âgées)
Johns, Helen	Huron	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health / adjointe parlementaire du ministre de la Santé
Johnson, Bert	Perth	PC	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Johnson, Hon /</b> <b>L'hon David</b>	Don Mills	PC	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, government House leader / président du Conseil de gestion, ministre de la Santé, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Johnson, Ron	Brantford	PC	

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Jordan, W. Leo	Lanark-Renfrew	PC	deputy government whip / whip adjoint du gouvernement
Kells, Morley	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	PC	
Kennedy, Gerard	York South / -Sud	L	
Klees, Frank	York-Mackenzie	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Richesses naturelles
Kormos, Peter	Welland-Thorold	ND	
Kwinter, Monte	Wilson Heights	L	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	L	
Lankin, Frances	Beaches-Woodbine	ND	chief New Democratic Party whip / whip en chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Laughren, Floyd	Nickel Belt	ND	
<b>Leach, Hon / L'hon Al</b>	St George-St David	PC	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Leadston, Gary L.	Kitchener-Wilmot	PC	
Marchese, Rosario	Fort York	ND	
Marland, Margaret	Mississauga South / -Sud	PC	
Martel, Shelley	Sudbury East / -Est	ND	
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste Marie	ND	deputy New Democratic Party whip / whip adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Martiniuk, Gerry	Cambridge	PC	
Maves, Bart	Niagara Falls	PC	
McGuinty, Dalton	Ottawa South / -Sud	L	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
McLean, Allan K.	Simcoe East / -Est	PC	
McLeod, Lyn	Fort William	L	
Miclash, Frank	Kenora	L	deputy opposition House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition
Morin, Gilles E.	Carleton East / -Est	L	Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président de la Chambre et Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Munro, Julia	Durham-York	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Premier / adjointe parlementaire du premier ministre
Murdoch, Bill	Grey-Owen Sound	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
<b>Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn</b>	Scarborough-Ellesmere	PC	Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Newman, Dan	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for native affairs / adjoint parlementaire du ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
North, Peter	Elgin	Ind	
O'Toole, John R.	Durham East / -Est	PC	
Ouellette, Jerry J.	Oshawa	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Transports
<b>Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al</b>	York Centre / -Centre	PC	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Parker, John L.	York East / -Est	PC	
Patten, Richard	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	L	
Pettit, Trevor	Hamilton Mountain	PC	
Phillips, Gerry	Scarborough-Agincourt	L	
Pouliot, Gilles	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	ND	
Preston, Peter L.	Brant-Haldimand	PC	
Pupatello, Sandra	Windsor-Sandwich	L	
Ramsay, David	Timiskaming	L	
Rollins, E.J. Douglas	Quinte	PC	
Ross, Lillian	Hamilton West / -Ouest	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
<b>Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.</b>	Leeds-Grenville	PC	Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels



Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ruprecht, Tony	Parkdale	L	
<b>Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob</b>	Mississauga West / -Ouest	PC	Minister without Portfolio (Privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation)
<b>Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William</b>	Eglinton	PC	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Sergio, Mario	Yorkview	L	
Shea, Derwyn	High Park-Swansea	PC	parliamentary assistant (municipal affairs – urban) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur urbain) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Sheehan, Frank	Lincoln	PC	
Silipo, Tony	Dovercourt	ND	deputy New Democratic Party leader / chef adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Skarica, Toni	Wentworth North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Smith, Bruce	Middlesex	PC	
<b>Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John</b>	Mississauga North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Education and Training / ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Spina, Joseph	Brampton North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant (small business) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur petites entreprises) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
<b>Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W.</b>	Carleton	PC	Minister of Environment and Energy / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Stewart, R. Gary	Peterborough	PC	
<b>Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris</b>	Etobicoke West / -Ouest	PC	Speaker / Président
Tascona, Joseph N.	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	PC	
Tilson, David	Dufferin-Peel	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General / adjoint parlementaire du procureur général
<b>Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H.</b>	Markham	PC	Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Turnbull, David	York Mills	PC	chief government whip / whip en chef du gouvernement
Vankoughnet, Bill	Frontenac-Addington	PC	
<b>Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble</b>	S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	PC	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones
Wettlaufer, Wayne	Kitchener	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Wildman, Bud	Algoma	ND	New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Wilson, Jim	Simcoe West / -Ouest	PC	
<b>Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth</b>	Waterloo North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Wood, Bob	London South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / adjoint parlementaire du président du Conseil de gestion
Wood, Len	Cochrane North / -Nord	ND	
Young, Terence H.	Halton Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant (colleges and universities) to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire (secteur collèges et universités) du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉES PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Administration of justice / Administration de la justice**

Chair / Président: Gerry Martiniuk  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Ron Johnson  
Marion Boyd, Robert Chiarelli, Sean G. Conway,  
Ed Doyle, Garry J. Guzzo, Tim Hudak,  
Ron Johnson, Frank Klees, Gary L. Leadston,  
Gerry Martiniuk, John L. Parker, David Ramsay,  
David Tilson, Bud Wildman  
Clerk / Greffier: Douglass Arnott

**Estimates / Budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Alvin Curling  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Joseph Cordiano  
Toby Barrett, Gilles Bisson, Jim Brown,  
Michael A. Brown, John C. Cleary, Joseph Cordiano,  
Alvin Curling, Brenda Elliott, Morley Kells,  
Peter Kormos, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Frank Sheehan,  
Bill Vankoughnet, Wayne Wettlaufer  
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**Finance and economic affairs /  
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Ted Chudleigh  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tim Hudak  
Ted Arnott, Isabel Bassett, Jim Brown,  
Annamarie Castrilli, Ted Chudleigh,  
Douglas B. Ford, Tim Hudak, Monte Kwinter,  
Tony Martin, Gerry Martiniuk, Gerry Phillips,  
Gilles Pouliot, Joseph Spina, Wayne Wettlaufer  
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**General government / Affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Jack Carroll  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bart Maves  
Jack Carroll, Harry Danford, Jim Flaherty,  
Bernard Grandmaître, Ernie Hardeman, Rosario Marchese,  
Bart Maves, Sandra Pupatello, Lillian Ross,  
Mario Sergio, R. Gary Stewart, Joseph N. Tascona,  
Len Wood, Terence H. Young  
Clerk / Greffier: Lynn Mellor

**Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Floyd Laughren  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony Silipo  
Rick Bartolucci, Bruce Crozier, Ed Doyle,  
Douglas B. Ford, Gary Fox, Michael Gravelle,  
Bert Johnson, Peter Kormos, Floyd Laughren,  
Gary L. Leadston, Dan Newman, Peter L. Preston,  
Tony Silipo, Bob Wood  
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Ted Arnott  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John Hastings  
Ted Arnott, Rick Bartolucci, Dave Boushy, Tony Clement,  
Carl DeFaria, Bill Grimmett, John Hastings, Ron Johnson,  
Frank Miclash, Gilles E. Morin, John R. O'Toole,  
Tony Silipo, R. Gary Stewart, Bud Wildman  
Clerk / Greffière: Lisa Freedman

**Ombudsman**

Chair / Président: John L. Parker  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tom Froese  
Elinor Caplan, Carl DeFaria, Barbara Fisher, Tom Froese,  
Doug Galt, Pat Hoy, W. Leo Jordan, Jean-Marc Lalonde,  
Rosario Marchese, Margaret Marland, John L. Parker,  
R. Gary Stewart, Bill Vankoughnet, Len Wood  
Clerk / Greffière: Lisa Freedman

**Public accounts / Comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Dalton McGuinty  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mike Colle  
Marcel Beaubien, Dave Boushy, Gary Carr,  
Mike Colle, Bruce Crozier, Brenda Elliott,  
Gary Fox, Steve Gilchrist, John Hastings,  
Gerard Kennedy, Shelley Martel, Dalton McGuinty,  
Gilles Pouliot, Toni Skarica  
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Regulations and private bills /  
Règlements et projets de loi privés**

Chair / Président: Toby Barrett  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bruce Smith  
Toby Barrett, Gilles Bisson, Dave Boushy, John Hastings,  
Tony Martin, John R. O'Toole, Trevor Pettit,  
Sandra Pupatello, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Tony Ruprecht,  
Mario Sergio, Derwyn Shea, Frank Sheehan, Bruce Smith  
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

**Resources development /  
Développement des ressources**

Chair / Président: Steve Gilchrist  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Barbara Fisher  
John R. Baird, Jack Carroll, David Christopherson,  
Ted Chudleigh, Marilyn Churley, Dwight Duncan,  
Barbara Fisher, Steve Gilchrist, Pat Hoy,  
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Bart Maves, Bill Murdoch,  
Jerry J. Ouellette, Joseph N. Tascona  
Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

**Social development / Affaires sociales**

Chair / Président: Richard Patten  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John Gerretsen  
David S. Cooke, Tom Froese, John Gerretsen,  
Michael Gravelle, Helen Johns, W. Leo Jordan,  
Gerard Kennedy, Frances Lankin, Julia Munro,  
Richard Patten, Trevor Pettit, Peter L. Preston,  
Lillian Ross, Bruce Smith  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

These lists appear in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month. A list arranged by riding appears when space permits.

Ces listes figurent dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et du premier lundi de chaque mois. Par contre, une liste des circonscriptions paraît si l'espace est disponible.









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**Assemblée législative  
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Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

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**Monday 13 January 1997**

**Lundi 13 janvier 1997**



**Speaker**  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

**Président**  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

**Clerk**  
Claude L. DesRosiers

**Greffier**  
Claude L. DesRosiers



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 13 January 1997

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 13 janvier 1997

*The House met at 1332.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** We begin our session today once again with people protesting outside Queen's Park. The people out in front of Queen's Park today were women from the Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis Centre of Peel and from a number of other concerned women's groups. These women were here because they're worried and because they want answers.

They are worried because the minister responsible for women's issues has commissioned a report that tells her that the government should shift its emphasis to prevention of violence rather than deal with it later. They are worried that this statement means less support for essential programs that give women immediate and essential safety and protection. There's no question that the prevention of violence is important, but protection and safety cannot and must not be jeopardized.

It is frightening when the author of this report says that abused women can return home after 24 or 48 hours and when the report makes no recommendations to ensure that home is safe. It is truly frightening when the author of the report apparently sees a difference between an abuser who only hits and one who is determined to kill. It is frightening to think that essential programs that provide support to victims of violence could be somehow just rolled into other community services. It is frightening that this report, throughout its content, is more concerned about efficiencies than it is about safety.

The minister must distance herself from this truly frightening report and ensure there will be no further cuts to the programs that meet the needs of victims of violence.

### GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** Welcome to the opening of the \$3-billion session, because that's what this session is all about. As we know, beginning today and throughout the week we'll hear a lot of announcements, from the amalgamation of the six cities in Metro Toronto, which has already been announced, to measures to shift the cost of education from property taxes to provincial taxes, but also to shift a large percentage of the cost of welfare, child care, public health and long-term care to the property tax base.

But we know, and people across the province will need to find out, that it's not going to be an even tradeoff at the end of the day. At the end of the day, property taxes will end up picking up a larger percentage of the costs, and they will be for services which will grow over time and whose costs will grow over time.

We already saw today the continuing saga of the Minister of Education —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. It's difficult to hear the member for Dovercourt. I know it's reunion day here, but let's try to keep it down so I can hear the statements.

**Mr Silipo:** We already saw today the beginning of the saga of the Minister of Education continuing to use figures that in other circles might be called somewhat misleading by claiming that 47% of the costs of education are outside the classroom — of course pretending that you don't need things like principals, libraries, music, science programs, special education programs, because all of a sudden, as far as this Minister of Education is concerned, those are outside the classroom.

People will find out that in fact what the Tories are all about is reducing the load on the richest citizens in the province and putting more and more of the tax load, in this case through property taxes, on to the average family across the province.

### YOUNG OFFENDERS

**Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West):** Ishmail Spence was murdered one year ago yesterday by a 16-year-old youth at the Kennedy Road subway station. Ishmail was returning home from school when he was made the victim of another senseless act that started with a small confrontation and ended in tragedy.

Subway stations, like malls and gathering places, attract youth and gangs, youth who congregate in public places and cajole, intimidate, swarm, tag, assault — all leading to more serious crimes.

Michael Amman Ewaschuk was murdered at the Main Street subway station over a baseball cap. Louis Ambus was stabbed at least 54 times during a petty theft, reputedly by two repeat young offenders.

The pattern is simple: Petty criminals left unpunished graduate to more serious crimes. An article called "The Police and Neighbourhood Safety" postulated the broken windows thesis: that unaddressed disorder is a sign that no one cares and invites more disorder and more serious crime. The mayor of New York City punishes minor crimes, and the serious crime rate has dropped.

My private member's bill, the Juvenile Delinquents Act, was prepared after the third youth was murdered in my area over a six-month period. Following the last



murder, I was swarmed by about 10 youths who surrounded me in my car, kicking doors and windows. My bill puts youth on notice that minor offences will be punished by curfews and fines — for sure. The third offence will result in the postponement of provincial privileges for at least three years. Driver's licences and age-of-majority cards will be delayed.

I urge members to attend on January 16 and support my bill.

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** I rise today to speak to what the Tories have dubbed mega-week but which I think should more appropriately be dubbed mega-scam or mega-disaster for taxpayers across this province.

What we're going to see this week is the most massive downloading of costs on municipal government in the history of this province. This government, with its shell game, with its fraud, with its deception of the taxpayers of Ontario, is leading us to believe that somehow this is going to benefit municipal property owners in this province. What we're going to see is more costs for social services; what we're going to see is more costs for roads, for transportation, for GO Transit, for sewer and water services across Ontario. What they're doing by removing education from property taxes they are going to more than make up for on the other side.

I can tell you that the senior citizen in my riding on a fixed income is not going to appreciate the fact that this government has now imposed on them and will impose on them in future years humongous tax increases at the local level as a result of its actions. Then you run and hide: It's the municipality's fault for increasing taxes; you're not accountable. You have ducked your responsibility. You're walking away from what you were elected to do across this province.

You have betrayed people. You have betrayed senior citizens, you have betrayed parents, you have betrayed teachers, you have betrayed every single sector of our society with the scam and the fraud you're pulling off this week.

1340

### NORTHERN AIR SERVICE

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** My statement today is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, Chris Hodgson. One year ago, after your government announced the shutdown of norOntair, you said the government should not be subsidizing air services and you were confident that the private sector would fill the void.

The situation experienced by northerners today shows that you were wrong. In my riding of Cochrane North, for example, air service from Kapuskasing to Timmins has been cut in half by Air Creebec, leaving business people and other travellers no choice but to spend the night in either Toronto or Timmins, or drive between Kapuskasing and Timmins, which means at least a two-hour drive. Air Creebec, which took over service to Kapuskasing last year when norOntair was dismantled, will now have only one incoming and one outgoing flight daily.

This also means that people who have to go for medical appointments in Toronto will not be able to make the trip in one day and will have to spend a lot of money for accommodation and extra days off work. Once again, northerners are paying the price, one which is much too high.

Your abandonment of air service in northern Ontario is putting municipal infrastructure, health care and the viability of northern businesses at risk. This government has caused the problem and we're asking that it fix the problem of travel in northern Ontario.

### R.H. KING ACADEMY

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** It's a great pleasure for me to rise in the House today to inform the members of the 75th anniversary of R.H. King Academy in my riding. It is a pleasure, not only because I'm the member for Scarborough Centre, but because I'm a proud graduate of R.H. King.

In 1919 a board of trustees was appointed to establish the first high school, named Scarborough High School, in the southern portion of the township of Scarborough. Seven acres were purchased from the Pherrill estate for \$14,000 and on June 29, 1922, the cornerstone was laid for the new building.

Although the school was not ready until November 22, 1922, classes began on September 6 in the Birchcliff Congregational Church, with Reginald H. King as principal, three other teachers and 116 students. Today, 1,325 students are continuing the tradition.

In January 1930 the school became Scarborough Collegiate Institute and in 1954, when the Scarborough Board of Education was established to serve all of Scarborough with Dr R.H. King as director, the school was renamed R.H. King Collegiate Institute. In 1987 the school was designated as Scarborough's first academy and renamed R.H. King Academy.

Some of King's former students include authors Maggie Siggins and Ron Brown, hockey great Bobby Baun, Scarborough Mayor Frank Faubert, Scarborough board chair Gaye Dale and Metro Councillor Ken Morrish. R.H. King Academy is an important part of the history of my community and I would ask every member to join me in congratulating everyone who over the years has played a part in the success of R.H. King.

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** The government calls this week and the weeks to follow the Who Does What session. Really, this should be entitled the Who Pays More and Who Will Get Less session, because that's what this government is proposing. They're proposing that municipalities pay a whole lot more for a number of services that they will now have to provide in addition to what they've traditionally provided. As well, citizens will have to pay more by way of their property taxes being forced up.

It follows that as a result of the transference of all these additional services, such as municipal transit, GO Transit and welfare costs, which will now be shared on an even basis, child care, public health, ambulance



services and long-term care, which could explode in the future, the costs could be enormous for municipalities. This government owes very careful consideration and a detailing of what those costs will be for the average citizen, the average property taxpayer in this city and across this province. This government owes an explanation to those people to detail those exact costs. The debate must be informed by that if we are to proceed in a rational, reasonable way.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. It is very difficult to hear the statements that are being made. I'd appreciate that if meetings are needed you could just go into the lobbies. Thank you very much.

### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** The previous Minister of Health approved the operating plan for the Sault area hospitals which proposed to close all the inpatient beds at Matthews Memorial Hospital in Richards Landing and turn the hospital into an outpatient clinic with so-called 24-hour emergency service, albeit with only one nurse on duty. It's not surprising that Mr Wilson approved these changes, since the decisions to make these cuts in service are a direct result of the Conservative government's cuts in funding for hospitals.

The administration of the Sault area hospitals has been faced with enormous cuts in provincial funding and, unfortunately for us who live in the rural area, chose to make the largest cuts at the satellite hospitals as part of their across-the-board cuts in hospital services in the Sault and area. The Tory Minister of Health, despite his stated commitment to rural hospitals, recognized this and approved the Sault area hospitals' operating plan. That means the end of Matthews Memorial Hospital as we know it.

It's important that the new Minister of Health reverse his predecessor's approval of the closures at Richards Landing. A first step would be for him to recognize that you cannot have a 24-hour emergency service at a hospital if there are absolutely no beds in the hospital and if there is only one nurse on duty. If he recognizes that, then he will ensure that there is adequate funding available.

### ALZHEIMER DISEASE

**Mrs Helen Johns (Huron):** Each January, in order to recognize Alzheimer Awareness Month, chapters across Canada hold various activities to promote awareness of Alzheimer disease. This year the local chapter in my riding is holding a county-wide Walk for Memories fundraiser on January 25 to raise awareness in Huron.

Alzheimer disease is a degenerative brain disorder that destroys vital brain cells. There are currently 250,000 Canadians with Alzheimer's and that number is expected to grow to 750,000 by the year 2030. It is estimated that the cost is approximately \$4 billion each year to care for Alzheimer patients. There is no known cause or cure for Alzheimer disease. Hope is increasing for all those with Alzheimer's due to numerous Alzheimer drugs currently being tested.

On September 6, I chaired a meeting with the Alzheimer Association of Ontario. We are the first government to enter into discussions to develop a strategy to deal with patients with Alzheimer's and dementia and their families. Approximately 50 people participated. We have received a report from the Alzheimer Association of Ontario and are currently in the process of reviewing it with the expectation that further announcements will be made in the near future.

The theme this month is "Turn Alzheimer into a Memory," and I would encourage all members of the House and those watching to participate in events in their community so that this disease will indeed become a memory.

### LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Before we move to ministry statements, I thought it would be a good opportunity to introduce to the members today the new pages, the eighth group that will be working with the 36th Parliament of Ontario:

Lisl Baker from Victoria-Haliburton; David Borden from London North; Breken Corcoran from Oakville South; Jonathan Howard from Mississauga South; Marybeth Kigar from Hamilton West; Greer Kirshenbaum from Oakwood; Alan Largo from Scarborough-Ellesmere; Jing Jing Liu from Beaches-Woodbine; Daniel Man from Durham Centre — back there too, we need order as we're reading these; thanks — Caitlin McCarter from Halton Centre; Brandon McKee from Sudbury East; Patrick McLarty from Essex-Kent; Shannon Murphy from Algoma-Manitoulin; Cameron Parrack from Etobicoke-Humber; Christopher Roscoe from York East; Lindsay Rudyk from Dufferin-Peel; Julie Sermer from York Centre; Darlene Sly from Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings; Sandeep Soni from York South; and Tara Stockwell from Northumberland. Welcome.

1350

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** It is with a tremendous sense of accomplishment that I rise today to announce yet another step in our plan to provide taxpayers with better services at lower costs. Our goal is to lower income taxes provincially and lower property taxes at the municipal level.

When this government took office we knew, because the people of Ontario told us, that government in this province had become too big, too wasteful, too complicated and too expensive.

As we said in the Common Sense Revolution, we simply don't need every layer of government we have now or the cumbersome bureaucracies supporting them, and we certainly don't need as many politicians as we have now. That's why we asked David Crombie and his Who Does What panel how we could make the provincial



and municipal levels of government in Ontario work better for the taxpayers they serve.

At this point I'd like to take the opportunity to thank Mr Crombie and his fellow panel members for their hard work and excellent advice. You will see, through the government's announcements this week, that we have adopted the bulk of the panel recommendations either in whole or in part.

We believe our decisions will result in simpler, smaller, more accountable and less costly government at both the provincial and municipal levels. We are also convinced that better services at lower costs can be delivered while protecting the priorities of the people of Ontario, such as health, education and social services.

As a starting point, we're taking education off the residential property tax and making it a provincial responsibility. This will allow us to improve the quality of schooling for every student in the province and protect taxpayers from the spiralling costs of school boards. My colleague the Minister of Education and Training, the Honourable John Snobelen, will outline reforms to our education system in just a few moments.

In the important area of social services, we're continuing to fix welfare, and we want taxpayers to share in those savings. My colleague the Minister of Community and Social Services, the Honourable Janet Ecker, will announce details of reforms planned in the social and community health services tomorrow.

In the next few days my cabinet colleagues will announce our decisions to provide better services, at lower costs, in libraries, provincial offences, police services, environmental infrastructure, transportation services, ambulances and property tax reform.

To ensure that we have a smooth transition, we plan to have most newly defined responsibilities in place for 1998, following the 1997 municipal elections.

Later this week we will also announce the details of a permanent \$1-billion fund which recognizes the special needs that some municipalities may have and which is part of an overall community reinvestment strategy. In particular, some municipalities in northern and rural Ontario may require ongoing assistance.

Our goals are all achievable. They won't be reached overnight, but they will be attained over the next few years as we finalize and implement changes that need to be made to reduce, once and for all, the size and cost of government in Ontario.

The road ahead is clear: better services provided at lower overall cost leading to tax savings for the people of Ontario. We are convinced our plans spell prosperity and renewed hopes for jobs, opportunity and our children's future. We believe it's a road well worth travelling.

#### EDUCATION REFORM

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** As Minister of Education and Training, I have gone on record as saying that Ontario taxpayers are not getting good value for the money they spend on education. Today we're going to do something about that, and at the same time we're going to ensure that the needs of all students in this province are met.

To meet students' needs and to ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent in the classroom, later today I will be introducing the Fewer School Bills Act — Fewer School Boards Act — I'm sorry, Mr Speaker. We will cut the —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** That's really what it is. That was a Freudian slip. There's fewer bills per school.

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock, please. Member for Sudbury, come to order. Minister.

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. In fact, it will be fewer bills: fewer bills going to the taxpayer. We will cut the 129 major school boards in Ontario by almost half and replace them with 66 new district boards effective January 1, 1998.

The new funding model will recognize the cost of special circumstances, such as students learning in English or French for the first time, students with special needs and students in remote communities.

One of my foremost aims has been to promote the involvement of parents in local schools. School councils led by parents have now been established in most Ontario schools, but we want to make sure that all schools always have advisory councils of parents, so in the spring we'll be introducing legislation to mandate this and to give them expanded advisory responsibilities.

Finally, to make sure the reforms I have mentioned today take place in an organized and careful way, we are establishing a commission which will work with local communities to guide the process of change.

I am confident that the measures I have outlined today will help us get our education system back on track and free residential property taxpayers from the spiralling costs of education.

Ontario students deserve the best we can give them, and I am confident that we can give them an excellent education while at the same time cutting bureaucratic duplication and waste. With our help, Ontario students can finally take their place at the head of the class.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** It is absolutely staggering to realize that any government could be so irresponsible as to propose such sweeping changes in the way education is governed and financed without having any idea at all of how this is going to work or what the impact is going to be, whether that impact is on communities or on local taxpayers or on employees of school boards. Certainly it has no idea of what the impact is going to be on students.

This legislation proposes only that there are going to be a different number of school boards and a different number of trustees. Nothing else has been worked out and nothing else has been decided. One thing is clear: There is going to be less local access, less accountability locally, and less ability for parents who are concerned about education to contact the people who are making the decisions.

Trustees are going to have what is called a less hands-on role. Nobody has decided what the role is going to be, but if you want to ask who is then going to control education, the answer is clear, because it is going to be bureaucrats and it is going to be Queen's Park. If you ask whether there are going to be some communities that may



not even have a single trustee as a representative, nobody can answer that question because nobody has actually looked at it. Nobody has worked that out.

They don't even know whether school boards are going to be elected at large or whether they're going to be elected by ward system. The government wants to look like it's bringing in change for change's sake, if nothing else, so it's going to forge ahead and then it's going to figure out later how it works or whether this will work.

The other thing that's clear is that this government wants to continue to cut the costs, the spending that it puts into education, and this is camouflage for further cuts to educational spending. John Snobelen himself has said that amalgamating boards isn't likely going to save any money. On Friday he brought out a significant report in which it says the size of boards is not a factor affecting the level of spending by school boards. The minister's own report as of Friday afternoon said that the ministry should go back and get a greater understanding of what does cause higher spending for some school boards. It was particularly concerned about costs that are beyond the control of a school board, like the number of special needs students the board has. Where are those special needs kids going to fall in the cracks as this government takes over total control?

1400

Suddenly, on Monday, the minister decides he can save millions of dollars by amalgamating school boards. That's what this is all about. This is all about camouflage to find new ways of cutting the dollars that go into education for our children.

The scariest statement of all that's been made is that if you look at how the millions of dollars are going to be found, one of the most significant areas will be staffing reductions. We know the ministry has already tested cutting 10,000 teachers out of our classrooms. The answer is no, Minister, you can't cut teachers without hurting classroom education.

They want the taxpayers to believe this is going to be good for local taxpayers. That's the other camouflage, the other part of the spin. There's no question that property taxes are not going to go down because of this announcement, because the minister has already indicated that the government is going to abandon its responsibility for almost all other social programs and dump these programs on municipalities. On top of that, Queen's Park for the first time ever is going to go directly after municipal property taxes by levying its own tax on businesses in every community. It hasn't even decided whether it's going to have one uniform tax rate across the province or whether it's going to do it community by community.

This is the worst of all worlds for everyone affected. It's the worst of all worlds for taxpayers who are now going to pay for the costs of programs that are beyond the control of their local municipality; it's the worst possible world for businesses which now have both Queen's Park and the local municipality going after them with increased taxes; it's the worst world for parents who will no longer have access to elected trustees and will be expected to manage the schools themselves; and it is certainly the worst possible world for students who are going to lose out again to a government that is so

determined to find new ways of cutting dollars it spends on education in order to pay for its tax cut.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** Once again this Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing hasn't told us everything. He states, for example, that "my colleagues will announce our decisions to provide better services, at lower costs, in libraries, provincial offences" etc. What he doesn't say is that municipalities will from tomorrow forward be responsible for all the costs of libraries, provincial offences, police services, environmental infrastructure, transportation services, ambulances and the property tax system.

The municipalities will be responsible, and you know as well as I do, Minister, that when the Minister of Community and Social Services makes her announcement with respect to welfare, municipalities will have to pay 50% of the welfare costs from then on in. Most municipalities — you know as well as I do and the taxpayers should know — will not be able to afford it.

Why are you doing this? All you're doing is simply downloading to —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

## EDUCATION REFORM

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** The minister in making his statement made a Freudian slip when he said that this was a Fewer School Bills Act, and then he tried to salvage that by saying there would be fewer bills for the taxpayers. In fact what it means is fewer dollar bills for education in this province. This is what this is about. This is all about control and cost-cutting. The government wants to gain control, at the expense of local autonomy, of education in the province, and wants to be able, starting in 1998, to take even more out of education than it did in 1996. That's what this is about.

The government plans to control education funding, to determine how much will be spent. When asked in his press conference today, directly, if this would mean that he could guarantee there would be the same amount spent as is now collected in the property tax, the minister skated, because he didn't have an answer and he didn't want to say no.

The fact is there's going to be less money starting in 1998 for classroom education and for education in this province as a whole because this government does not want to have the kind of expenditures that are now accruing from the property taxes spent on education. This is about trying to pay for an income tax cut for those who will benefit at the top end of the income scale at the expense of students and classrooms across Ontario. This is not about improving expenditure levels for rural, poor boards, areas, or even separate boards.

This is about getting more money out of Metropolitan Toronto and Ottawa, for instance, boards that in the past have been able to collect through the property tax for education. It also doesn't mean lower property taxes in general because the government is transferring other costs such as welfare to the municipalities, and my colleague will speak about that.



## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** Shakespeare said, "Methinks he doth protest too much," and we're seeing here a government that's going to spend \$800,000 on an advertising campaign because they want to protest over and over again to the public of Ontario that this is about efficiency. They do protest too much.

People can see through this rhetoric. This is about extracting billions of dollars from education, from health care and from communities in order to pay for this government's phoney tax scheme to benefit the wealthy. The scheme this government is announcing here today is all about finding the money so that corporate executives can get their \$200,000 tax gift from this government and bank presidents can get their \$200,000 tax gift from this government while this government strives hard to disguise how they're going to extract money from education and set up an agenda at the municipal level which will disguise how they're going to extract money from municipalities and health care.

It won't happen so easily. People know that simply taking money out of education, simply taking from wealthy boards like Toronto or Ottawa, is not going to benefit other boards. It simply means bringing the best boards down, not bringing boards that have had a difficult time in the past up. People know that when you pass off important health care services like long-term care and homes for the aged on to municipalities, municipalities will be stuck in the position where they will either have to increase their property taxes significantly as our population gets older, or they will have to cut those important health care services. People know that.

This government is hoping that if they shuffle enough decks, people out there won't notice, that people will blame municipalities when their health care services, their ambulance services and their police services start to fall, that people will blame municipalities when poor people can't get the help they need. This is all about refusing to take responsibility and trying to shove responsibility off on someone else.

We won't let that happen. We're going to expose what this government is really all about, no matter how many \$800,000 ad campaigns they put out.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Just so we're all clear on this, you're not fooling anybody. Your actions are about one thing, and one thing only: finding the cuts you need to pay for your irresponsible tax cut scheme. It's about cutting important services like the health care seniors need, about cutting things like the education our children deserve, about creating new property taxes and about fewer services.

Minister, why don't you just forget the propaganda campaign and tell us the truth? Why won't you admit that this is really about more cuts, fewer services and higher property taxes?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** He hasn't got that quite right, because this is all about providing better services at less cost to the taxpayers of Ontario, and that's what we're doing. Every one of our actions that we're going to be rolling out this week will show that to be the fact. Our announcements today on education and our announcements tomorrow on social services will all benefit the taxpayers of Ontario. Taking 60% off the cost of education is going to give a window of opportunity for municipalities to deliver those services that they should be delivering at a fair cost to the taxpayer.

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**Mr McGuinty:** Try as you might, nobody's buying that. What you're really doing is creating a smokescreen of chaos behind which you're trying to hide your property tax increases, your health care cuts and your cuts to education. That's a smokescreen accompanied by an \$800,000 propaganda blitz, all to find money to pay for a tax cut none of us can afford.

What you're announcing this week will lead to different levels of care for our seniors depending on which city they live in. It's going to cut hundreds of millions from our schools and raise property taxes right across the province. Is the damage you are about to inflict really worth it? Is it really worth destroying the things that make Ontario great just to pay for Mike Harris's irresponsible tax cut promise?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I'm glad that the Leader of the Opposition mentioned senior citizens, because I think that if there's one thing that has irritated senior citizens over the years, it's been having to pay for education out of the property tax. This is going to alleviate that irritant to them. Senior citizens don't mind paying their fair share of taxes, but they like to pay for services they're receiving. This is going to give the municipalities the opportunity to deliver services, like garbage and roads and sewer and water, that should be delivered and paid for by the municipality. This exercise is going to be as close to revenue-neutral as we can make it. There may be some advantages to the municipalities; there may be some advantages to the province. When we all sort it out, I think we'll be pretty close to a wash.

**Mr McGuinty:** If senior citizens have concerns about education being on their property taxes, they ain't seen nothin' yet. When it comes to destroying things that make Ontario great, there is no better example than your heavy-handed and dictatorial approach to the megacity. Metropolitan Toronto was recognized by Fortune magazine as the most livable city in the world. Now, with practically no public debate, with no meaningful input, you are planning to ram your megacity through this Legislature in record time. You are being told that your megacity will result in higher property taxes, a lost sense of community and fewer services overall. Is your tax cut really worth jeopardizing the very things that have resulted in Toronto being recognized as the greatest city in the world? Is it really worth it?

**Hon Mr Leach:** We're looking forward to the opportunity of taking a great city and making it even greater, by eliminating the waste and duplication of the delivery of services that now exist in Metropolitan Toronto, by



eliminating six planning departments — seven planning departments, as a matter of fact — six fire departments, making them into one, bringing some efficiencies that will save the taxpayers money. I think the vast majority of the people of Metropolitan Toronto are looking forward with excitement to seeing one city of Toronto for all of us.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** New question.

**Mr McGuinty:** What they are looking forward to is having you pay some attention to the results of the upcoming referenda.

#### EDUCATION REFORM

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):**

My next question is for the Minister of Education and Training. Today John Snobelen confirmed the worst fears of many parents and students across Ontario. Our Minister of Education is going to compromise education in Toronto to pay for a \$6-billion tax cut we can't afford. Students, parents, teachers and even public polls have already told the Harris government that the \$400 million already cut from education has led to rundown schools, more portables, more students in our classrooms and the loss of many special education programs.

We're not fooled by your announcement today. What you're really after here is money to pay for a \$6-billion tax cut. Your real intention is to get an additional \$1 billion from our children's classrooms. Isn't this what it is really all about? You're taking control of education in Ontario because only then can you take the money out.

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I want to thank the honourable member opposite for the question. In response directly to that question, this announcement today is about creating a new school system for the province of Ontario and making sure that money taxpayers spend on education makes a difference with the students in Ontario. That's what it's about.

**Mr McGuinty:** Nobody's buying that either.

Let me focus in on a specific here. In the Common Sense Revolution, you promised not to cut classroom spending, yet the very activities that allow teachers to teach, classrooms to be functional, and students to have access to things like books through libraries, you define as spending outside the classroom. To even suggest that these things are not part of direct classroom learning shows just how far you're prepared to go to take money out of education.

Minister, how can you justify defining books in our libraries, books that are used inside the classroom, as an outside-the-classroom expense? How can you say that the heating and cleaning of the insides of our classrooms is an outside-the-classroom expense? How can you call the important work our teachers do in advance to prepare for classes an outside-the-classroom expense?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** In answer to the question, in today's announcement we've obviously indicated very clearly to the people of Ontario that this government intends to take a senior role in funding the education of children in the province. Not only that, but this government is committed to making sure that every single

student in the province has his or her needs met in the classroom, that the spending will be directed for what they need and what they want, regardless of what those circumstances might be for that individual student. If that's an English-as-a-second-language student, a student in an isolated community, a student who needs some remedial work in class, we will meet those needs; we will fund those needs.

In direct response to the inside or outside the classroom, we released a study last week that indicated that the range of spending outside the classroom is anywhere from 51% in the worst-case scenarios in Ontario to over 80% in the best cases, the money directed to the classroom. We think we can use the best examples of the best practices across the province and the rest of Canada and make sure we can make a difference —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary.

**Mr McGuinty:** Let's focus in on teachers for a minute. It was recently uncovered that in focus groups you ran and paid for, you told participants that you were considering cutting 10,000 teachers from Ontario classrooms. You can't possibly suggest that this won't impact the inside of our children's classrooms. The driving force behind your education reforms has more to do with an ill-considered promise to cut taxes by 30% than a desire to improve education in Ontario.

When are you going to stand up for education in Ontario? When are you going to tell Mike Harris that he can't have any more education money because the future of our kids and our province depends on it?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** Rarely in my limited time in this chamber has any member stood in the House and been more wrong than the Leader of the Opposition is today. Our commitment —

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Hamilton East, I'm warning you. Next time I'll be asking for you to be removed from the chamber.

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** To inform the member opposite, the province does not employ 10,000 teachers in the province of Ontario. We employ teachers at our provincial schools, but we are not the employer of teachers in our school system; school boards are. Under our new school system they will remain the employers of teachers across the province.

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To further clarify the matter for the member opposite, our reforms, our changes, our new school system announced today will do two things that are of benefit to the teachers of this province. One of those is that they will allow us to put forward a system of curriculum in this province with clear standards and clear outcomes so that teachers will know that students entering their classes have the skills necessary to participate in them. Second, teachers can take to heart our promise that the funding needs of students across this province will be met in every part of this province.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** It is also to the Minister of Education and Training, and let me say to the minister that the only thing teachers take to heart about



you is that you're intent upon cutting education and you're intent upon using all kinds of devices to disguise those cuts.

Let me just bring this up, since one of the studies you refer to talks about classroom education. It's an Ernst and Young study, and that study makes it clear that you don't count libraries as classroom education, you don't count guidance counsellors, you don't count school social workers, you don't count psychologists, you don't count preparation time, you don't count custodians and janitors who keep the schools and the classrooms safe and clean, you don't count principals, you don't count vice-principals, you don't count support staff and you don't count curriculum people.

Minister, are you saying that all those people who do all those important jobs in our schools aren't important and they can be cut? Is that what you're really saying here, that you can cut all those services and it won't matter for our children's classroom education?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** Certainly the member opposite, the leader of the third party, knows there is a variety of services important to students across this province. We want to make sure that our funding is focused on those that are most important to those students in meeting the high standards across the province.

What our announcements talk about today is a new funding methodology, one that meets the needs of every individual student across the province, and removing education from the property taxes across the province, where they've gone up over the last decade by an average of 5% per year.

Let me remind the member opposite of this: Over the last 10 years we've had a 16% enrolment increase in the province, but the spending of boards has gone up by 82% and the residential taxpayer is paying 120% more in that same time period. It's time for that to end.

**Mr Hampton:** I'll come back to where I started. The minister talks about how much he wants to reduce education costs, and it's clear from all the rhetoric he's been spewing that he says he is going to take all these costs out of non-classroom education. I ask him, does this mean that libraries don't count for classroom education, guidance counsellors don't count, social workers don't count, psychologists don't count, principals and vice-principals don't count, that the people who ensure that our schools have discipline and order don't count for classroom education?

Minister, come clean. You keep talking about how you're going to cut these costs. Are you saying that these things — the work a custodian does, the work a principal and a vice-principal do, the important work a guidance counsellor does with children — are unimportant and can be cut? Come clean. Where are you going to take the money out?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I remind the member opposite that this government has said very clearly today and on previous days, and I've said this on many occasions over the last year, that we have no target for a spending reduction in education. We have indicated very clearly today that we believe, based on outside reports, that there's as much as \$150 million in duplication and waste in the administration and bureaucracy surrounding our

education system in the province. I think that comes as a surprise to no one who's observed the school system over the course of the last decade.

Our commitment is really very clear. It's to make sure that there are sufficient funds to meet the needs of every student in the province, right across the province. We've said very clearly that we intend to do that and we intend to be held to account for our promises.

**Mr Hampton:** The minister mentions that he thinks about \$150 million can be saved by reducing the number of school boards and centralizing control over the education system here in Toronto, by letting the nameless, faceless bureaucrats in Toronto tell everybody in this province how their education system is going to be run. Minister, that gets you \$150 million. It wipes out school democracy, but it gets you \$150 million.

The problem you've got is that you've been saying, "No cuts to classroom education," but we know that school libraries across this province have been closed because of your cuts, we know that special ed classes have been wiped out because of your cuts, we know that there are classrooms with over 40 children in them because of your cuts.

If this is not about taking money out, let me ask you for a guarantee. Will you guarantee that the total amount of money going towards our children's education will be no less in 1998 than it is today?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I think we've come very clean with our new school system today. I will just go over some of the highlights for the member opposite so he might know where we think we can find some economies in our school system so we might be able to end some of the waste and duplication that his government left or encouraged in the system.

For instance, we believe that the \$150 million I just mentioned — that may sound like a small amount to the member opposite, but it seems like a large amount to me — we'll be able to reach that because we have two thirds fewer trustees in our new model, we have two thirds fewer trustees' support, we have half the education directors, half the senior supervisory officers, half the directors of finance, half the directors of personnel, half the business superintendents, half the payable clerks, half the receivable clerks, half of the human resources department, half of the administrative support, half of the curriculum officers, half of the office space and half the office equipment. I think we might be able to find some savings in this that will not affect classroom education.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr Hampton:** I did not hear a guarantee from the Minister of Education and Training that we'll see the continuing money spent on classrooms and children.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I put it to you today that your announcement is about cutting and slashing education, health care and other important community services. You have to do this because you have to pay for your phoney tax scheme in order to give bank presidents their \$200,000 gift. That's what it's all about.



I put it to you that this is what you're doing, so I'm going to ask you to categorically deny that you're going to transfer important community and health care services to municipalities, to say that you're not going to do that, that you're not going to push off important social assistance services and important health care services and important transportation services on to municipalities. Will you deny that you're going to do that?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I think the leader of the third party must have recognized that when we were going through the Who Does What panel, the whole exercise was to try to decide which level of government could best deliver and pay for services. Obviously if the province is going to assume \$5.6 billion in education costs, the municipalities are going to assume the cost of a number of hard services, services they can deliver, services they can pay for, services they would have 100% control over. That was the whole point of the exercise.

The leader of the third party might remember that when his party undertook the disentanglement exercise, unfortunately they were going in the right direction but it fell apart on them. We're trying to have the right level of government deliver the right services, and that's what this exercise is about.

**Mr Hampton:** I asked for a denial and I didn't get it, so let me probe a little deeper. Minister, I put it to you that these services you're going to pass on to municipalities, services like social assistance — even David Crombie said you should not push off social services on to municipalities, because when times get really hard, municipalities will not have the resources to provide for the poor, the homeless and people who need help. I put it to you that even David Crombie disagrees with what you're doing.

Since you won't deny you're going to push these services on to municipalities, will you give them a guarantee that their municipal property taxes won't have to increase over the next three years to cover these services? Will you give them that guarantee?

**Hon Mr Leach:** Not only would I not deny it, I would state it as a fact. When you're going through a separation-of-services exercise, where you're trying to decide which level of government can best deliver the services, obviously there are going to be services that are now shared between the province and the municipality that are going to become 100% the responsibility of the municipality.

If it works out as we believe it will, and we're quite confident that it would, with our taking education off the property tax and transferring functions down to the municipality, functions that are stable, and education is climbing at 5% a year, by the year 2000 the municipalities would have the potential of cutting property taxes.

**Mr Hampton:** The minister will know, or if he doesn't know yet he'll soon be learning, that social services and health care services are closely linked. If people suffer badly in terms of nutrition or suffer badly in terms of housing or suffer badly in terms of public health, sooner or later they end up in the health care system.

I want to put it to you: We've got a tradition in this province that we should have equal access to health care, equal access to health across the province, but your scheme means that municipalities are now going to have to fund a lot of this. Your scheme means that people who live in, say, Cornwall, which was hard hit by the free trade agreement and hard hit by the recession, are going to have to pick up all these costs.

Are you going to guarantee that people across this province will continue to have equal access to health care, equal access to public health, equal access to nursing services and home care services? Are you willing to guarantee that now as you begin this exercise of pushing all these services down on municipalities? Will you guarantee that?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I know what we can guarantee is that the province of Ontario and the citizens of Ontario are going to be a whole lot better off when we eliminate all the waste and duplication that's currently being undertaken. Obviously there are going to be shifts in who pays for what. Right now there are those who pay for welfare, those who pay for health care.

**Mr Hampton:** So if you live in a poor community, it's back to the Depression: You do without. This is not headed into the future, this is going back to the Depression.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Leader of the third party, would you please come to order.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I would like to point out to the members of the opposition that we announced earlier that we are going to be rolling out a number of announcements this week. My colleague the Minister of Community and Social Services, the Honourable Janet Ecker, will be making an announcement on social services, health and social housing tomorrow which will clarify many of the points the member is asking about.

TRUCKING SAFETY

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. I want to raise with you a matter which I know you recognize as being of the utmost seriousness. It seems that not a day goes by without another truck accident. Just this morning another incident was reported outside of Thunder Bay. There have been over 30 incidents of runaway truck wheels in the past 13 months in Ontario.

We feel this issue has taken on such a high public profile and is of such a serious nature that it ought to be given special attention by this House. I'm asking for your support to have this matter referred to a legislative committee so that all of the facts can be brought forward and potential solutions considered. Will you support my request?

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I welcome the question from the Leader of the Opposition and I'm really saddened by the recent events, especially where lives are lost. One can only say that we must do better.

I believe this government has shown a strong commitment to enforcing safety on our highways, and we've come some way but we still have a long way to go. I've



been saying all along that government alone cannot do this. I think we have to get industry and we also have to get insurance people involved, and I welcome the opposition's involvement in making this thing happen.

But I really want to say this: In fiscal 1995, MTO staff inspected 19,500 vehicles; in the first seven months of 1996, we inspected 27,000 vehicles. I want to share something else with the Leader of the Opposition: In 1995, MTO staff removed 1,400 plates and laid 8,200 charges; in the first seven months of 1996, we removed 2,300 vehicles and laid —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Minister of Transportation, come to order, please.

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, I want you to understand that I am putting forward this suggestion in a non-partisan way. Ontario drivers are afraid of the trucks travelling our highways. They need to understand and we need to understand the root causes of this problem and we need to ensure that we're coming up with the right solutions. I'm asking you to take this step in addition to those you're already taking. The problem is so dangerous that we owe it to our public and ourselves to treat it in the serious manner it deserves. If we don't have a crisis on our highways, we at least have a crisis of confidence in the minds of Ontario drivers, so I'm asking you once again for your support in having this matter referred to a legislative committee immediately so that all of the facts can be brought forward and the very best potential solutions considered.

**Hon Mr Palladini:** I think I have been quoted many times, but we will not stop until Ontario's roads are the safest in North America. Certainly we are going to implement whatever it's going to take to make sure our roads are safe. Like I said earlier, government alone cannot do it, but we as a government are taking the steps that are necessary.

I really would like to remind the honourable member that his party could have done something in 1987 in enforcing a weight measures act. They did not do that. This government had the courage to do that. This government has the courage to do other things as well.

Our staff right now are looking to implement an automatic truck suspension. We're actually going to be able to suspend a vehicle, whether it's for 15 days or 90 days.

It's going to be some of these measures that are going to make our road safer, but it does take time. I want to appeal again: I welcome the opposition's help in making sure our roads are safe.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** My question is to the minister responsible for the greater Toronto area. Opposition to your megacity scheme is clearly growing within Metropolitan Toronto.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. I don't mean to interrupt, but unless I could be mistaken, I don't believe there is a minister responsible for the greater Toronto area.

**Mr Silipo:** Mr Speaker, I've always understood that to be part of the name of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing with responsibilities for the GTA.

**The Speaker:** The question has to be put to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

**Mr Silipo:** I wasn't trying to be misleading at all, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** I understand.

**Mr Silipo:** Minister, as I was saying, opposition to your megacity scheme is clearly growing within Metropolitan Toronto. So far, over 250 citizens and community groups have already said that they want to make a formal presentation to the legislative committee on Bill 103. People want to be heard on this issue. You have clearly stirred up widespread anger and fear. They don't want the bill to pass, and they certainly don't want the bill to pass quickly.

I want to ask you to give your personal guarantee today that your megacity bill will not be whipped through before the municipal referendum that's scheduled for March 3 of this year. Will you give that guarantee today?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** No, I can't give that guarantee to the member. We're going to process the bill through second reading —

*Interruption.*

**The Speaker:** I will clear the assembly if it's necessary. You can't do that. It's simply not in order.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** I'll clear both sides at the same time.

**Hon Mr Leach:** Mr Speaker, thank you. We're going to be bringing the bill forward for second reading and then the bill will go through the legislative process and committee hearings where everyone will have an opportunity to have their input, as they should. That's the democratic way to do things: have committee hearings, allow people to make deputations, give their concerns, give suggestions, give options, all of which would be taken into consideration, and that's what this process is going to do.

I hope to bring the bill in for second reading early, within the next few days. I hope the opposition parties will support its quick passage through second reading so that it can get to that public debate. If they're saying that they want to have public involvement and input, then they should give it a chance to get to committee.

**Mr Silipo:** You refuse to be clear with me. Let me be clear with you: You will not get any help from this party in getting this bill through quickly.

What you should be doing as the minister responsible, if you believe in the words that you have just uttered, in the democratic way to do things, is to ensure, given that there is a public referendum under way, that you will not push this bill through before that process has been gone through and before the people of Metropolitan Toronto have the right to express their opinion and their feelings on this important issue.

You can do that today without hiding behind the process. We all know the process. We all know that you're starting debate on second reading of this bill tomorrow and we all know that it can go through in a way that does what you say you want to do and still respects the right of citizens out there to have their fair say. Once again, Minister, will you ensure that you will not use your legislative means to ram through this bill before the



referendum process is completed in Metropolitan Toronto?

**Hon Mr Leach:** It's interesting. I don't know what kind of referendum process he's talking about. The six municipalities are in total disarray when it comes to this. To the best of my knowledge, I think some of them are going with a mail-out ballot. Some of them are calling for a vote; some of them are calling for a modified referendum. Besides that, when we met with the mayors early in December — in fact, the end of November, I believe — we discussed the referendum question with them, we discussed the possibility of having a referendum, pointed out why a referendum isn't appropriate on this issue and told them that the province would not be bound by a referendum held on this question.

What question would you ask? You're going to have a loaded referendum question that would be inconclusive and wouldn't resolve anything.

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### SELF-MANAGEMENT

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North):** My question is to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. The 1996 business plan for your ministry, and subsequently the passing of Bill 54, the Safety and Consumer Statutes Administration Act, in June of last year, outlined the government initiative to move forward towards self-management for a number of business sectors regulated by your ministry. Could you inform my constituents of Halton North and the Legislature what progress you are making towards implementing self-management for real estate agents and brokers, travel agents and wholesalers, automobile dealers and cemetery operators?

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** I'd like to thank the member for Halton North for the question. Yes, through our ministry's business plan and Bill 54 we outlined our intention to enable the ministry to delegate certain duties and responsibilities to the industries for administration, licensing, enforcement and consumer protection, to non-profit, independent private organizations.

On Monday, January 6 I signed an administrative authority agreement, as provided for under Bill 54, setting up a new, independent, non-profit Ontario Motor Vehicle Industry Council. The organization is now up and running. In February or early March I anticipate that we will be signing a similar agreement with the real estate industry.

Just at the end of last year I had the opportunity to be in Hamilton to go to a greater Hamilton real estate brokers meeting along with the member for Hamilton West. The industries are enthusiastic about this because they believe it will increase the standards for the consumer across this province.

We have discussions going on right now with the travel industry and also with the cemetery operators to have similar agreements. When these agreements are in place —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr Chudleigh:** There is some suggestion and comment being made that by turning over these responsibilities to the private sector, consumer protection will be lowered. Can you inform the House what protection will be in place to assist the consumers of Ontario?

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Whether you are screwing the consumer: That's what you wanted to ask, isn't it, whether or not you are screwing the consumer?

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** I hear a lot of noise coming from across the floor with respect to this initiative, that somehow it's quite similar to many of the initiatives that have been proposed before by the third party.

**Mr Kormos:** I was just making the observation that you are screwing consumers, Tsubouchi; you've abandoned them.

**The Speaker:** Order. Member for Welland-Thorold, that's out of order. I would ask you to withdraw it.

**Mr Kormos:** Withdrawn.

**The Speaker:** Also, member for Welland-Thorold, when you're addressing the Chair, you must stand. I would ask you to withdraw the comment.

**Mr Kormos:** Withdrawn.

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** So much for that New Year's resolution, I guess, eh?

What we are doing right now is going to self-management, not self-regulation. The ministry will maintain its critical functions for regulation, for consumer protection, and certainly will have the responsibility still for standards-setting and policies. The experience in other jurisdictions, such as Saskatchewan and BC and Alberta and Quebec, has shown that the consumer response has increased as a result of these type of initiatives. Also, we will be able to appoint consumer representatives to be on the council as well as a member of the ministry. We do have checks and balances to ensure that consumer protection will continue.

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** A question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs: You just said you would not wait to hear the results of the referendum on your proposed megacity. You've basically said again that you don't care what people say. You have said you're going to have committee meetings. I ask you, will you therefore commit to allowing everybody who wants to speak to the committee to have a right to speak to you and the committee when this legislation goes to committee?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** We would certainly commit to allowing everybody to speak as the time allows. But certainly if you're going to have a write-in campaign, as I understand is going on now, where you've got hundreds of individuals writing in wanting to speak individually in a planned protest to try to disrupt the committee process, I don't think that's apparent.

If the members opposite really want to get into the true democratic process and give people the opportunity to have their say in this project, get second reading through, get it to committee, and give them the opportunity to speak and say their piece as quickly as we possibly can.



**Mr Colle:** It's obvious the minister is saying he doesn't care what people say on a referendum, he's not going to allow people to come to the committee; he's going to put a time allocation on it. So I ask the minister, why this haste? Why this bulldozer agenda? Why are things so wrong in Toronto that you have to bulldoze these six cities? What's the emergency? Here's the city that's been called the best in the world and you're saying it's got to be destroyed. Why the emergency? Why the demolition of democracy, Minister?

**Hon Mr Leach:** The member opposite speaks as if this was the first time this issue was ever raised. This issue has been debated in this community for the last 25 years.

On referendum, I don't know where that Liberal Party is coming from. Your member from Windsor spoke up last week and said that referendums were totally inappropriate, that they should only be held on issues of national interest. Where are you coming from on referendum? Are you for it or against it? And where are you coming from on amalgamation? What's your position this week? Are you for amalgamation or against it? Several years ago, that was Mr Amalgamation himself.

#### SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I have a question for the minister responsible for women's issues. You may be aware that a large group of women braved the cold this morning and gathered outside the Legislature, many of whom are with us here in the gallery today. In case you haven't got the message yet, they are here to tell you to back off, leave services for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence alone. Only after the crisis last month with the leak of your controversial consultants' report, only then —

*Interruption.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Can they be removed, please. The member for Riverdale.

**Ms Churley:** Only then did you and your Premier say that you wouldn't do anything to jeopardize the safety of women. Yet, incredibly, you seem to remain committed to this report and you refuse to tell us what you are going to do to the services for victims of abuse. Today, Minister, will you give us your government's commitment for the continuing support of women-controlled services for women who are victims of sexual assault and domestic violence?

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues):** First of all, I'd like to underline on behalf of everybody in the House the fact that violence is not tolerated in society and that this government, as have the two previous governments, has made it a priority to find the right programs, the right services, and to have accountability in what we do to help victims of violence. I think that's extremely important.

Second, in answer to the question, I don't really think the member meant that she would want us to leave victims of sexual assault alone. I think our responsibility here is to help them and to look for the best advice we can get in improving our programs in Ontario.

On the last point about women-controlled, I'm not certain what the member meant in that regard, but I do know that the most important leadership and the best leadership we can get in providing these programs is important to all family life in Ontario, and I would welcome the input of the member —

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**The Speaker:** Minister, thank you. Supplementary.

**Ms Churley:** Minister, that was a very nice answer, but we believe your mind is already made up and I think you do know what I mean by "women-controlled centres for women" very well. You're not really talking to anybody if you don't know what that means.

We gave you a copy of an internal document, a memo from December 19, which indicates that the kind of reform discussed in that report was already under way in eastern Ontario. The report was aimed at legitimizing a decision your government has made to dismantle women's services. The evidence is there. You see, we all know that there is no duplication in services for victims of abuse and that you cannot reconfigure these services to save money without seriously jeopardizing accessibility for victims.

I am simply asking you today to take the next step: Do your job finally, Minister, and stand up for women today. Will you assure us that women's shelters, transition houses and rape crisis centres will be financially —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. The member for Riverdale, come to order, please. Minister.

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** I think the concerns of the member are concerns that all of us have as we take a look at changing our system and making it better. There will always be these kinds of questions.

But I do take exception to the kind of questioning today by the member. I don't think she is supported in giving out this kind of information. The report that she is waving was an internal report. Something that was going on in eastern Ontario does not represent the focus of this government. The focus of this government, as was the focus of your government, as was the focus of the Liberal government, is to make certain we have programs that are accessible, that work, that assist victims of violence. This is not an exercise about cutting costs; it's an exercise about making programs better. I think what's very important is that you have advised women to meet with me to give me their best advice, and I will be meeting with some of them tomorrow.

#### WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** My question is to the Minister of Labour. Your Bill 99 is a comprehensive reform of the workers' compensation legislation. I've received many verbal and written inquiries from my constituents in Durham East with respect to Bill 99. Many have expressed an interest in having an opportunity to discuss the legislation at public hearings. Minister, do you have any information which might be of assistance in clarifying the government's position on this matter?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour):** We certainly have also received inquiries regarding public hearings and I just want to go on the record one more



time and indicate that as soon as we have further passage of the bill through the House, we will be having public hearings and —

*Interruption.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** This side as well as this — well, I'm going to clear the galleries.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Members from the third party.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** Point of order.

**The Speaker:** No, I'm standing. Member for Dovercourt, take your seat, please.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** What has anybody said on this side?

**The Speaker:** Order. I'm not — clear the gallery. Order. When I said, "Clear the —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** They're not clearing them out. No. Order, order. When I said, "Clear the gallery," I meant this gallery. This gallery didn't need to be cleared.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** No, they don't need to.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Welland-Thorold, okay, if you have a point of order, I'll be happy to hear your point of order. I'm simply waiting.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** What about the clock?

**Mr Pouliot:** What about the clock, sir?

**The Speaker:** The clock's running.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Okay, member for Dovercourt, you have a point of order?

**Mr Silipo:** Mr Speaker, I think maybe then the error was corrected. I thought that you indicated earlier that you were going to clear both sides of the gallery. That's why I stood up.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The Speaker responded to what all of us heard were some comments made from the gallery. Clearly not every member of the public sitting in that gallery was engaged in participating in that sort of commentary. Speaker, with respect, you have imposed a collective punishment, which is repugnant internationally.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Kormos:** Well, it is. My friends laugh, but you have excluded members of the public —

**The Speaker:** Member for Welland-Thorold, I appreciate what you're saying. I will answer it very quickly and hopefully we can get back to questions. I couldn't tell who was commenting. There were a number of comments coming from the top.

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** Do you want to borrow my glasses?

**The Speaker:** The member for Cochrane North.

I appreciate the fact that it was frustrating. I couldn't tell. It was very simple: I couldn't see who was commenting or who wasn't. It was easier to simply remove that side of the gallery. That's the decision I took.

Frankly, I don't find myself to be an undemocratic individual. That's how I feel about the situation.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** So that's my response to your point of order.

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think it would be unjust to the members of the opposition if you did not add some time to the clock. When you ordered the galleries cleared, I think you unfairly punished members of the opposition by taking time away from us. I think it would be fair and not unreasonable to ask the Speaker to add to the clock the two minutes which have been taken away from us.

**The Speaker:** In future I would suggest —

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Hamilton East and others, in future I would suggest to you that if I'm going to clear the galleries I will stop the clock. It was probably a mistake of mine not to stop the clock. I will add two minutes back on to the clock.

Member for Durham East, supplementary.

**Mr O'Toole:** I recognize that Bill 99 is a complete overhaul of Ontario's workers' compensation legislation and that it promises to introduce a totally new approach that emphasizes first and foremost the prevention of injury and illness. The people of Ontario have been waiting for a real change at the Workers' Compensation Board for a very long time. Is the minister able to be more specific as to when these hearings will take place?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I would certainly concur. We have a new piece of legislation, and as we've said on many occasions, this legislation has as its number one priority the prevention of illness and injury in the workplace and will soon be identifying as a target what type of reduction we're looking at. Obviously it's going to depend on what happens in this House. The bill needs to go through second reading. Once the bill's gone through second reading, then we'll be able to have public hearings. We still hope the bill will become law on July 1.

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## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and it has to do with his announcement today and a fairly fundamental direction. You appointed the Who Does What committee. They spent a considerable amount of time studying this issue. They reviewed the matter you dealt with today. Their recommendation was clear and it was exactly the opposite of what you're proposing. You're proposing that the areas of health and welfare move back down on to property tax and education come off it. Your handpicked panel said that it strongly opposes such a move. "We are unanimous in the view that if there's a choice between placing education or health and welfare on the property tax, it is clearly preferable to continue to rely on the property tax for the funding of education."

Can you give us a brief explanation of why you've chosen to completely ignore your own panel's recommendation.



**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I said in my statement earlier today that we would be making a series of announcements on education and on social services. I would suggest to the member opposite that when he sees the whole puzzle put together during the next three or four days of this week, many decisions that we're announcing today will become obvious. The Minister of Social Services will make a statement in this House tomorrow afternoon and introduce legislation which I think will go a long way to answering the member's question.

**Mr Phillips:** You owe the people of Ontario an explanation. We have people who are deeply involved in education. You've made a fundamental recommendation here, completely contrary to your own panel, that unanimously, strongly opposed what you're doing, and you've made the announcement today. So I'm saying to you, get on your feet and give us an explanation of how you reached the decision that is completely, 180 degrees opposite to that of your own handpicked panel. You owe the people of Ontario an explanation, and we want to hear it now.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I thank the member from Scarborough very much. The panel recommended that if we were considering putting all of welfare and all of health down on to the municipalities, it would prefer to see education stay on the property tax. All I can tell the member opposite right at this point in time is that you're going to have to wait until tomorrow to see the rest of the answer that is going to come out. All our announcements are not being made in one day. This is a comprehensive program that's going to roll out over the next three or four days.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** New question.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. You are turning this province upside down. You are deranging the soul of Ontario, and worse, you are plunging an ice pick in the heart of all the communities of Ontario. You are taking over \$5 billion out of the property taxes for education purposes. You need to make up for that somehow. You will not raise income taxes because you're too afraid to raise income taxes to make up for those \$5 billion, so what are you going to do?

You need to shift that equal amount, as you have said, to make it revenue-neutral, on to the municipalities. So that poor senior you talked about, who you said is going to get relief, is not going to get relief, because those municipalities all over the place are going to be faced with welfare costs, libraries, long-term care and a whole variety of health care needs. How are those municipalities going to cope?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I think I answered this question earlier. The whole point of a disentanglement or separation of services exercise is to get one level of government to provide and pay for services, the best level of government that can do that. If we're going to take \$5.6 billion off the property tax, we're going to give to the municipalities those services that they're best prepared to deliver — roads, sewer, garbage — all the services the municipality can provide better, at cheaper cost, to the taxpayer. It's obvious.

**Mr Marchese:** Minister, you are driving an ice pick into the heart of our communities. That is what you're doing. Provinces have greater access, and more important, federal governments have greater access to tax people, but municipalities have a problem: They can't raise property taxes the way they would like because people would rebel. They don't have that same power to be able to collect taxes to pay for the ongoing needs of welfare. That's not going away, and long-term-care needs of people are not going away, health care needs are not going away and library needs are not going away. Municipalities do not have that power to collect the money in the same way provinces would be able to.

I ask you this: How are municipalities going to cope with those ongoing needs? I tell you they're either going to increase property taxes or, Minister, if you're listening, they're going to have to reduce the services and fire people. That's what I think is going to happen in our municipalities.

**Hon Mr Leach:** That's very similar to a question that came from the Liberal Party, and I'll have to say there is going to be a major announcement on social services tomorrow and it's going to deal with the question the member asked.

We have been as clear as we could be in pointing out in our announcement today that we're rolling out a whole package of programs over the course of this week, and that when the ministers make their announcements during the course of the week, all these issues will become very clear.

## TAXATION

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** My question is to the Deputy Premier and the Minister of Finance. The overriding objective of the government's economic policy has been to create jobs and encourage hope and prosperity, a return to hope and prosperity in Ontario. Small business is the key to job creation in the province. High payroll taxes kill jobs. When the employer health tax was brought in, it killed thousands of jobs across the province.

### *Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Would you come to order, please. That's not very funny actually.

**Mr Baird:** Could the minister tell the House what steps the government is taking to reduce the worst offender of all, the employer health tax, particularly for small business?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** The member will know that even the federal Finance minister, Mr Martin, refers to payroll taxes as job killers, and there's no doubt that they are. I think that every government at every level has an obligation to try to reduce payroll taxes as much as it possibly can.

On January 1, 1997, the first instalment, if you want to put it that way, or the first tranche of a reduction of the employer health tax, the first \$200,000 of payroll by small businesses all across this province, is now exempt from this job-killing tax. This will continue to escalate, in January 1, 1998, to the first \$300,000, until it's finally fully implemented on January 1, 1999, for the first \$400,000 of payroll, which covers small businesses as



they're defined in Canada, which will be exempt from this job-killing tax; 88% of employers, representing 270,000 businesses, will be exempt from this tax.

**Mr Baird:** Another job killer in Ontario was the \$4 billion or \$5 billion worth of tax increase brought in by the previous government. The experience was that raising taxes killed jobs and it destroyed consumer confidence in every region of the province. Could the minister tell the House the early effects of the first two instalments of the tax cut?

**Hon Mr Eves:** The honourable member also knows that on January 1, 1997, we instituted the second instalment of the provincial income tax reduction. Now fully 15% of the promised 30% reduction has been implemented in Ontario.

We've also, as the honourable member will know, tried to do this in a proportionate way so that those earning more income than others will pay a fair share health levy which will reduce the size of their particular personal provincial income tax reduction.

At the same time, talking about payroll taxes, it is kind of difficult when you have the federal government raising EI premiums and CPP premiums to Ontario taxpayers in the amount of half a billion dollars in 1997 alone.

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#### PHYSICIANS' FEES

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** My question is to the acting Minister of Health. You recently signed a deal, an agreement with the doctors, that's purported to cost about \$150 million. We have reason to believe that this will cost the taxpayers in the area of \$350 million to \$400 million and, as the Premier has said, it will have to come out of the system and be paid for by the taxpayers.

More and more doctors are charging patients for services such as missed appointments, toll charges for long-distance calls, sick notes and back-to-work notes. One option they have been offered is that you can pay what is called an alternative or a family fee, for example, \$100 per individual, \$200 per family. It has been reported to me that if a patient pays this annual fee, they receive preferred service for appointments. Alternatively, if they don't pay the annual fee —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. Just as a quick point, he's not the acting minister, he's the Minister of Health.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** Thank you for that clarification, Mr Speaker.

I might say to the member opposite that we were delighted on the weekend that the doctors ratified the deal with the province of Ontario. Of course there had been concern about job actions last year. We now again have the continuity and the excellence in service that we're accustomed to in Ontario in our health care system. It shows again, as I indicated over the weekend, that the doctors are putting the patients first in Ontario.

I take some dispute with the member's numbers with regard to the future because we are back into negotiations on a full-time basis with the doctors in terms of the

longer term, and the cost to the people of Ontario, the cost to the health care system will be dependent on those negotiations.

I would say to the member opposite that we support the principles of the Canada Health Act that health care services be accessible and equal to all people of the province of Ontario.

#### PUBLIC GALLERY

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: It's with respect to the expulsion of all the strangers from the west visitors' gallery. My understanding is that standing order 18 says: "All strangers may be excluded from the House or any committee thereof on a motion properly moved and adopted by the House or the committee, as the case may be," but "All strangers." I just want to understand, Mr Speaker, why would you exclude all people? In the meantime, you have permission to exclude an individual, a stranger, so how could you exclude en masse all strangers from the west visitors' gallery?

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** As far as I understand the ruling that you read from, they may be removed on a motion passed by the House but they may also be removed by the Speaker, on either side or all the galleries themselves. That can be moved by any member this House in fact agreed to, but the point is that the Speaker is allowed to remove individually or collectively sections within the building.

**Mr Curling:** That's not what it says here. Allow me to read it.

**The Speaker:** All right, go ahead.

**Mr Curling:** "Any stranger admitted to any part of the House or gallery who misconducts himself or herself, or does not withdraw when strangers are directed to withdraw...." It is saying you can do that individually, but it goes on to say in 18: "All strangers may be excluded from the House or any committee thereof on a motion properly moved and adopted by the House or the committee, as the case may be." I didn't see anywhere, Mr Speaker, where it said you can do that collectively. It says you can ask somebody, an individual, a stranger, to withdraw but not on a collective basis in this way.

**The Speaker:** To the member for Scarborough North, in my opinion, the ruling and the workings of this House and the standing orders are that the Speaker is allowed to ask people to be removed from the Legislature.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** You must act judicially, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** I say to the member for Lake Nipigon, I don't like getting interrupted every time I get up to speak. It's very frustrating sometimes. Right now I feel frustrated with the member for Lake Nipigon.

**Mr Pouliot:** I can't help you there, sir.

**The Speaker:** Yes, I suggest you could help me there.

I say to the member for Scarborough North, if you're suggesting to the Legislature, to myself the Speaker and all the members here that you now want to restrict the Speaker's ability to have galleries cleared or in fact individually remove members from galleries, that that is the only way in fact a gallery can be removed, then I



guess that's something you're going to have to get together with the House leaders on and ask them to relate.

But in my opinion, as I read the standing orders and have seen in the past previous Speakers do, the Speaker has asked galleries to be removed. I know you have seen that as well, having been a member here for a long time. I can only tell you that's the practice I've seen in the past, that's the call of the Speaker, and I think it's a reasonable amount of power to ask the Speaker to exercise.

## MOTIONS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** I move that notwithstanding standing order 96(d) Mr Ouellette and Mr Murdoch, and Mr Pettit and Mr Leadston, exchange places in the order of precedence for private members' public business.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

## PETITIONS

### NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I've affixed my signature.

### PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** I have a petition from a number of my constituents. I won't read the entire petition, but it has to do with the anticipated cutbacks to workers' compensation and the rights of injured workers.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to hold full, province-wide public hearings on WCB reform; to listen to the voice of the people calling for improved occupational health and safety protection; and to tell the Tory government to call off its attack on the dignity and standard of living of injured workers and their families."

## ONTARIO CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTE

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** I have a petition to the Legislature and to the Honourable Robert Runciman.

"Whereas we, the undersigned, believe that helping reduce crime and abuse in our communities is our responsibility as employees of the Ministry of Correctional Services, as professionals in related fields and as concerned citizens;

"That closing institutions which provide specialized services to women and treatment to men does not achieve that goal;

"That physical, emotional and sexual abuse is often transmitted from one generation to the next, with tremendous cost to society;

"That treatment aimed at breaking that cycle must include the abuser so that another generation of children is not raised with the same destructive lessons;

"That," as Mr Ross Virgo has stated, "the Ontario Correctional Institute is a therapeutic community known around the world for their techniques;

"That research statistics support anecdotal evidence that we are effective in changing abusive behaviour;

"That a therapeutic community cannot exist in a superprison;

"Therefore, we urge you to save victims and money by keeping open what works."

I will sign my signature to this document because I agree with its content.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I continue to receive thousands of petitions regarding this government's anti-worker agenda. These petitions, signed by thousands of auto workers from Local 222 of the Canadian Auto Workers, were specifically sent to me by Paul Goggan, the health and safety representative at the car assembly plant, on behalf of Mike Shields, the president, Don Whalen, the shop committee person, and Ron Gibson, the car plant chairperson, on behalf of their members. The petition reads as follows:

"To ensure enforcement of the health and safety act at the General Motors Oshawa car assembly plant:

"To Premier Harris:

"Whereas we the undersigned CAW Local 222 members working in the General Motors Oshawa car assembly plant are opposed to the lack of enforcement by the Ministry of Labour against General Motors, who is prohibited by law from taking reprisals (disciplining, threatening, intimidating, or penalizing) any worker who has acted in compliance with or has sought enforcement of the Occupational Health and Safety Act or regulations;

"Therefore, we demand enforcement of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and direct involvement of Labour Minister Elizabeth Witmer to ensure enforcement of the health and safety legislation for the protection of the workers in the General Motors Oshawa car assembly plant."

On behalf of my caucus colleagues, I add my name to theirs.

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## PUBLIC LIBRARIES

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth):** Mr Speaker, I have a petition from the St Marys library board.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we believe that provincial interest in public libraries in Ontario is fundamental to the rights of all Ontarians,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to maintain the provincial interest in public libraries by ensuring the continuance of the following:

"(1) grants to ensure that all Ontarians have equalized access to library materials and services;

"(2) coordination of resource-sharing programs such as interlibrary loan and Internet access;

"(3) policy to ensure the future of the network of Ontario public libraries;

"(4) provincial assistance directly to libraries at the service level, for example, through Southern Ontario Library Service and Ontario Library Service-North;

"(5) legislation that maintains the autonomy of public library boards."

I'll sign this petition on behalf of my constituents. It's signed by 45 of them.

## EDUCATION

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** I have a petition to the government of Ontario.

"Whereas the proposed changes to secondary schools as outlined in Ontario Secondary Schools 1998, the detailed discussion document, make it easier for students to drop out; and

"Whereas the types of courses offered, as outlined in the discussion document, will not meet the needs of minority students; and

"Whereas there is too much emphasis placed on workplace education, as outlined in the discussion document; and

"Whereas, as outlined in the discussion document, students who are at risk of dropping out will continue to be at risk; and

"Whereas there is a lack of minority teachers to act as teacher advisers, as outlined in the discussion document; and

"Whereas there is reduced time in ESL and ESD courses, as well as in English courses, as outlined in the discussion document; and

"Whereas the proposals of anti-discrimination education, as outlined in the discussion document, are virtually meaningless;

"We, the undersigned, wish to express our great dismay and opposition to these proposed changes and urge the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training to reconsider these ill-advised changes."

## WORKFARE

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a petition which is addressed to the Honourable Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"We, the following undersigned citizens, beg leave to petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the Harris government has initiated the workfare program; and

"Whereas the unemployment rate in the province of Ontario increased by 57,000 in the month of September 1996, giving a clear indication that there is a need for job creation; and

"Whereas the majority of welfare recipients do want to work and there is no evidence that workfare will create permanent jobs; and

"Whereas we believe workfare will eliminate permanent jobs;

"Therefore, be it resolved that the government of Ontario abandon its workfare program and concentrate on job creation."

This is signed by 18 residents of the city of Timmins. I have signed it as well, and I agree with the petitioners.

## HOTEL DIEU HOSPITAL

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"Since the Hotel Dieu Hospital has played and continues to play a vital role in the delivery of health care services in St Catharines and the Niagara region; and

"Since Hotel Dieu has modified its role over the years as part of a rationalization of medical services in St Catharines and has assumed the position of a regional health care facility in such areas as kidney dialysis and oncology; and

"Since the Niagara region is experiencing underfunding in the health care field and requires more medical services and not fewer services; and

"Since Niagara residents are required at present to travel outside of the Niagara region to receive many specialized services that could be provided in city hospitals and thereby not require local patients to make difficult and inconvenient trips down our highways to other centres; and

"Since the Niagara hospital restructuring committee used a Toronto consulting firm to develop its recommendations and was forced to take into account a cut of over \$40 million in funding for Niagara hospitals when carrying out its study; and

"Since the population of the Niagara region is older than that in most areas of the province and more elderly people tend to require more hospital services;

"We, the undersigned, request that the government of Ontario keep the election commitment of Premier Mike Harris not to close hospitals in our province, and we call upon the Premier to reject any recommendation to close Hotel Dieu Hospital in St Catharines."

I affix my signature as I'm in complete agreement with this petition.

## ONTARIO DISEASE PANEL

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have further thousands of letters and petitions from auto workers in Windsor, another part of the province that opposes this government's anti-worker agenda. This was forwarded to me by Dave Crosswell, who is the political



education chairperson for Local 200, CAW, on behalf of Alex Keeney, the president, and the thousands of members there.

The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Harris government has recommended that the occupational disease panel be 'eliminated' even though the panel has proven to be a major source of prevention because occupational disease cannot be prevented unless its causes are fully researched; and

"Whereas members of the CAW have known for some time about the dangers of exposure to machining fluids; and

"Whereas the Ontario Disease Panel has researched this issue and confirmed our belief that machining fluids cause laryngeal cancer and that this important research has enabled us to prevent our members from getting cancer of the larynx; and

"Whereas the Ontario Disease Report on laryngeal cancer was released over a year ago but the WCB has still not adopted it;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Labour direct the WCB to adopt this report on laryngeal cancer and that the Ontario Disease Panel and its research functions be maintained and not integrated into the Workers' Compensation Board."

I add my name to theirs on behalf of my colleagues.

#### PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** I keep receiving petitions against the \$2 user fee that is levied against seniors. This reads:

"Whereas the Ministry of Health has started to charge seniors a \$2 user fee for each prescription filled since July 15, 1996; and

"Whereas seniors on a fixed income do not significantly benefit from the income tax savings created by this user fee copayment or from other non-health user fees; and

"Whereas the perceived savings to health care from the \$2 copayment will not compensate for the suffering and misery caused by this user fee or the painstaking task involved to fill out the application forms...."

Then it goes on with one paragraph in Portuguese.

*Remarks in Portuguese.*

Finally, it ends by saying:

"We, the undersigned Ontario residents, strongly urge this government to repeal this user fee plan, because the tax-saving user fee concept is not fair, sensitive, or accessible to low-income or fixed-income seniors; and lest we forget, our province's seniors have paid their dues by collectively contributing to the social, economic, moral and political fabric of Canada."

You know what? I'm signing my signature to this petition because I agree with its contents.

#### MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a petition which is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the constitution of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario states that, 'We believe in and accept our responsibility for the preservation of...and the conservation and renewal of our environment for present and future generations'; and

"Whereas the Common Sense Revolution makes no mention of the environment, and thus this government has no mandate for the systemic dismantling of Ontario's environmental regulations; and

"Whereas protection of the environment, especially as it relates to human health, continues to be a serious concern for Ontarians; and

"Whereas prevention of air and water pollution is linked to prevention of cancer and other deadly diseases; and

"Whereas the minister's decision to return large-scale waste incineration to Ontario will inevitably lead to an increase in atmospheric toxins; and

"Whereas the Minister of Environment continues to preside over the destruction of a three-decade-long legacy of environmental legislation;

"We, the undersigned, humbly request that the Premier of Ontario immediately request the resignation of the Minister of Environment."

This is signed by 10 residents of the riding of Sudbury East. I have affixed my signature to it and I agree with the petitioners.

#### SALE OF AMMUNITION

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the NDP government under former Premier Bob Rae passed legislation, Bill 181, the Ammunition Regulation Act, placing restrictions on the sale of ammunition in Ontario; and

"Whereas the provisions contained in Bill 181 are time-consuming, onerous and create unnecessary red tape; and

"Whereas the records for which these provisions have been produced do not track criminals; and

"Whereas Bill 181 was passed in only one day, without any discussion with law-abiding gun owners such as farmers, collectors, hunters and recreational shooters, who understand and have a deep respect for the power of firearms and ammunition and the need to maintain and use their equipment in the safest of conditions; and

"Whereas Bill 181 will do nothing to combat the use of illegal ammunition;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to repeal Bill 181, protect the rights of responsible firearms owners and work for tougher penalties against weapons offences."

I have signed this and I did not vote for Bill 181.

#### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have another petition dealing with hospitals, which says:

"Whereas the Conservative government of Mike Harris has closed three out of five hospitals in Thunder Bay and two out of three hospitals in Sudbury; and

"Whereas drastic funding cuts to hospitals across Ontario are intimidating hospital boards, district health councils and local hospital restructuring commissions into considering the closing of local hospitals; and

"Whereas hospitals in the Niagara region have provided an outstanding essential service to patients and have been important facilities for medical staff to treat the residents of the Niagara Peninsula and will be required for people in Niagara for years to come; and

"Whereas the population of Niagara is on average older than that in most areas of the province;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Minister of Health to restore adequate funding to hospitals in the Niagara region and guarantee that his government will not close any hospitals in the Niagara Peninsula."

I affix my signature as I am in complete agreement with this petition.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

FEWER SCHOOL BOARDS ACT, 1997  
LOI DE 1997 RÉDUISANT  
LE NOMBRE DE CONSEILS SCOLAIRES

Mr Snobelen moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 104, an Act to improve the accountability, effectiveness and quality of Ontario's school system by permitting a reduction in the number of school boards, establishing an Education Improvement Commission to oversee the transition to the new system, providing for certain matters related to elections in 1997 and making other improvements to the Education Act and the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 / Loi de 1997 visant à accroître l'obligation de rendre compte, l'efficacité et la qualité du système scolaire ontarien en permettant la réduction du nombre des conseils scolaires, en créant la Commission d'amélioration de l'éducation, chargée d'encadrer la transition vers le nouveau système, en prévoyant certaines questions liées aux élections de 1997 et en apportant d'autres améliorations à la Loi sur l'éducation et à la Loi de 1996 sur les élections municipales.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members; this will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1533 to 1538.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time until your names are called.

Ayes		
Arnott, Ted	Gilchrist, Steve	Murdoch, Bill
Baird, John R.	Grimmett, Bill	Mushinski, Marilyn
Barrett, Toby	Hardeman, Ernie	Newman, Dan
Bassett, Isabel	Harnick, Charles	O'Toole, John
Beaubien, Marcel	Hastings, John	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Boushy, Dave	Hudak, Tim	Parker, John L.
Brown, Jim	Jackson, Cameron	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Carr, Gary	Johns, Helen	Ross, Lillian

Carroll, Jack	Johnson, Bert	Sampson, Rob
Chudleigh, Ted	Johnson, David	Shea, Derwyn
Clement, Tony	Johnson, Ron	Sheehan, Frank
Cunningham, Dianne	Jordan, W. Leo	Skarica, Toni
Danford, Harry	Kells, Morley	Smith, Bruce
DeFaria, Carl	Klees, Frank	Spina, Joseph
Doyle, Ed	Leach, Al	Tsubouchi, David H.
Elliott, Brenda	Leadston, Gary L.	Tumbull, David
Eves, Ernie L.	Marland, Margaret	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Fisher, Barbara	Martiniuk, Gerry	Witmer, Elizabeth
Flaherty, Jim	Maves, Bart	Young, Terence H.
Froese, Tom	Munro, Julia	

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will rise one at a time until your name is called.

Nays		
Bisson, Gilles	Gerretsen, John	McGuinty, Dalton
Boyd, Marion	Grandmaitre, Bernard	McLeod, Lyn
Bradley, James J.	Gravelle, Michael	Miclash, Frank
Brown, Michael A.	Hampton, Howard	Patten, Richard
Caplan, Elinor	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Castrilli, Annamarie	Kennedy, Gerard	Pouliot, Gilles
Christopherson, David	Kormos, Peter	Ruprecht, Tony
Cleary, John C.	Kwinter, Monte	Silipo, Tony
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Wildman, Bud
Crozier, Bruce	Marchese, Rosario	Wood, Len
Curling, Alvin	Martel, Shelley	
Duncan, Dwight	Martin, Tony	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 59, the nays are 34.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

FIRE PROTECTION  
AND PREVENTION ACT, 1996  
LOI DE 1996 SUR LA PRÉVENTION  
ET LA PROTECTION CONTRE L'INCENDIE

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 84, An Act to promote Fire Prevention and Public Safety in Ontario and to amend and repeal certain other Acts relating to Fire Services / Projet de loi 84, Loi visant à promouvoir la prévention des incendies et la sécurité publique en Ontario et modifiant ou abrogeant certaines autres lois relatives aux services de lutte contre les incendies.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I have about four minutes left to summarize what is our leadoff speech on Bill 84. The last time I was speaking we outlined a number of very serious concerns throughout this bill. Let me just say that the primary concern that firefighters, fire chiefs, legislators and, I would say, the general community have is whether or not this bill will, as the minister claims, improve our fire protection and prevention within the province. That has to be the focus that we have as we discuss Bill 84.

Quite clearly, it is our belief that there are elements and implications within Bill 84 which put at risk the



levels of fire protection that Ontarians have learned to expect and on which we all rely. Some of those issues arise because of the way in which this government is insisting on delivering what they call flexibility to municipalities at the same time that they are withdrawing the huge proportion of grants from municipalities and the ability, frankly, to tax citizens of municipalities appropriately to provide these services.

It is our belief that by the twinned provisions around allowing part-time firefighters and allowing fire chiefs to call in part-time firefighters to assist at what they define loosely as a major emergency makes it possible for a slowdown in response time. A slowdown in response time is an essential worry for all of us. Inquest after inquest has shown us that that first response time is the key to saving lives and to saving property. A fire doubles in size and intensity with each minute of delay. Four minutes in a smoke-filled room, deprived of oxygen, and our brains die. Left too long, fires burn out of control. They destroy homes and entire communities. The issue of response time, the issue of how that is going to be improved rather than endangered, as we believe it is under Bill 84, is enormously important.

It is also our belief that those very provisions around part-time firefighters and the whole issue of calling people in for major occurrences jeopardize the teamwork on which public safety relies. By enabling municipalities to tamper with the firefighting system that has been developed by professional firefighters over time and is used across Ontario today, Bill 84 absolutely makes it impossible for us to guarantee that the kind of teamwork that we expect from organized and efficient fire services will continue to exist.

Frankly, this bill has the potential to put families and communities at risk. It is important that the government understand that is why we are calling, as are the firefighters, the fire chiefs and many municipalities that have concerns, for full public hearings on this bill, this bill alone. This bill should be our focus of attention around public safety, around fire protection and fire prevention. It should go out to municipalities across the province because our municipalities are unique in the way they have developed fire services and the way in which they need to be protected because of their differing characteristics.

It is important, and I call upon the government, to reassure firefighters, to reassure the opposition and the communities our firefighters serve that they will have a full opportunity to discuss this bill and their concerns about it in full public hearings; that this bill will not be lumped in with a bill yet to be introduced around civilian control of the police, will not be looked at within a lump of other public safety issues but will get the attention that was guaranteed by the Solicitor General to the firefighters and the fire chiefs when this bill was introduced.

1550

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Questions or comments?

**Mr Gary Carr (Oakville South):** I'll be very brief. I just want to thank the member. She spent about 90 minutes going through, point by point, some of the issues, and I can assure you that we take her points very

seriously. In fact, I sent a copy of the Hansard over to the ministry staff, and there will be a bit of a reply coming back. I thank the member and will look forward to going on with the debate over the next little while and leading up to the committee as well.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** I'd like to congratulate our critic responsible for the Solicitor General in this particular piece of legislation. Most people in the services of firefighting would know that Marion Boyd, the member for London Centre, has done a lot of work across Ontario in this particular area. I think she recognizes, because of her unique perspective of being the prior Attorney General under the NDP government, and understands the legalities involved with legislation, but more practically what it means from the anecdotal evidence and the work she's done with firefighters and fire chiefs across this province in looking at what this legislation does. If you listened, first of all prior to Christmas, to the lead part of her speech and to what she said in the short four or five minutes she had now, she really brings us down to the fundamental issue: a question of safety for the citizens of Ontario.

We can at this point sleep well at night knowing we have firefighters in this province who are professional firefighters, who are trained to do the job and by and large get the funding and support they need, both from the municipal levels of government and the province, in making sure that fire services in this province are second to none. We know that if there's a fire call, the firefighters who will come to fight that fire are able to do so both because of their professionalism and the support they get from the provincial and municipal levels of government.

All this is about the change, because this legislation, in short, allows municipalities, through enabling legislation of the province, to do a number of things that will diminish the safety of the citizens of this province by allowing, among other things, a lowering of the number of professional firefighters and changing a number of regulations that exist within current acts about how safety is approached from a fire services perspective.

I hope that the members in the government have listened to the member and taken some of her comments to be able to make the changes that are necessary in this legislation.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Windup.

**Mrs Boyd:** I'd like to thank the member for Oakville and the member for Cochrane South for their kind comments. I think that is the issue we need to keep in front of our minds. All of us know that as time goes on, the requirements for us to protect our changing communities change dramatically.

We know that firefighters not only fight traditional fires but do a great deal of the emergency and rescue work in all of our communities. Those of us who are fortunate enough to live in areas that are served by professional firefighters have come to rely on those professional firefighters in a way that has become quite subconscious. We don't think about it often enough.

Hopefully, as we go through the discussion of this bill, we will come to appreciate more and more the dangers they face every day, the professionalism and the training that's required to deal with new substances that may



cause problems, as in chemical spills, as in some of the very hazardous situations they face.

I hope we will come to appreciate the level of training, the level of teamwork that is required, and that if we expect those services to be there to preserve our public safety, we as a community must be prepared to support those services.

This is the time, if ever there was one, for the people of Ontario to show their support for the very professional services that are under discussion in Bill 84. It is important for every citizen to inform himself or herself about the implications of this bill and take advantage of the opportunity to show support for their professional firefighters, for their volunteer firefighters, as this bill travels around for discussion within our communities.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Bruce Smith (Middlesex):** It's certainly a pleasure today as well to speak to Bill 84 briefly; for the next few minutes at least. The member for London Centre spoke on this issue at some length prior to the Christmas break and did so from a very insightful and constructive viewpoint. I congratulate her on doing so.

I admit that I'm addressing this issue from two different perspectives: first, as a government member who strongly supports the general thrust of the bill, and second, from the perspective of a person who has had a career in municipal administration and some experience with this issue as well as a personal interest in the administration of fire services in this province, at the municipal level at least. I freely admit that I address this matter from perhaps two different points of view.

The reality is that this bill is very timely in the sense that it's been nearly 50 years since some major issues surrounding fire services in this province have been adequately dealt with. Therefore, change is very much long overdue.

The bill is consistent with the government's commitment to redefine the role and function of local government, and this is a very appropriate application in that regard.

Based on that premise, the bill is focused on the principle that municipalities are essentially responsible for arranging fire services according to their own needs and circumstances. Second, the primary role of the province will be to provide a leadership or support function to municipalities in the exercise of their duty.

The third general objective, and perhaps the most important, is that the focus of this bill provides a strong direction with respect to fire prevention and public education. I believe it is important that we remember that more than 30 coroners' juries have called for a more coordinated approach to fire safety and fire prevention in this province. The office of the fire marshal indicates that some 80% of fires are accidental and could have been prevented with greater fire prevention and education.

I think also that all members of this House would agree that too often we awake to the news of an overnight fire to see and hear about human loss of life or injury, the loss of personal belongings as well as property, only to have that news clip end with a fire official in a particular community emphasizing the need for public

safety, education and the use of smoke detectors; too often a common occurrence that we see in our media.

Therefore, I feel public education and awareness are very critical to our efforts to combat injury associated with fire, and I certainly congratulate the Solicitor General for his efforts and his aggressive pursuit of this initiative as it applies to the education and prevention component in a very meaningful way.

Apart from the general themes, it's important to recognize that the backbone of our fire services in this province is reliant on some 26,000 firefighters. This includes firefighters in both volunteer and full-time capacities. I want to reflect upon that briefly for a moment.

From a volunteer perspective, I must say that I've had some direct experience with volunteer departments and have observed many changes with respect to the services they provide. First, they obviously bring an immense commitment to the community and the responsibilities they hold within their community. They hold an immense sense of pride in their abilities and the equipment they're provided with by their municipal councils.

They are certainly a group of individuals who continue to respond to the demands of fire services, demands which have witnessed the transition from what I would have to describe generally as fire suppression and protection to vehicular extraction, medical emergencies and community awareness activities; a wide-range transition and one that has been greeted very positively by the many volunteers who exist in this province.

This is a group of individuals who are routinely involved in community charity events, a group of individuals numbering approximately 18,000 in this province, representing nearly a \$1-billion asset to the province as well.

I'm certainly encouraged by any government effort which provides volunteers with the necessary tools to fulfil responsibilities that they currently have and those responsibilities that may be presented to them in the future.

From a different perspective, I think it's important to recognize the professional services that are provided to us in this province. Again, these are individuals who are intensely committed to their profession, intensely committed to the community they serve and equally intensely committed to the safety and wellbeing of their own colleagues. All of these are commendable attributes.

On a personal basis, I have met with the representatives of the London professional firefighters and I think it's important on their behalf to make a few comments. Some of their comments I agree with and I know they will disagree with some of my personal views.

1600

I'd have to say from an initial perspective that you will not, in my mind at least, find a firefighter in this province, in the city of London, in a voluntary or professional capacity, who would not support any initiative for the enhancement of public education and fire prevention. That is simply not an issue with many fire professionals in this province. They are involved in this exercise now. They are involved in our schools, in our businesses, they're at fairs, they're at special events, and this is not a new part of the responsibilities they currently hold. I



think it's important that we recognize this, because too often it's easily forgotten.

Secondly, I think it's important to recognize that professional firefighters, at least in my community, have some genuine concerns, primarily with section 9 of the bill. Firefighters in my community have expressed both concern and opposition in general, and they are equally concerned about the language, the clarity and lack of definition, as they believe, in the legislation. On that basis I trust that public hearings would provide an opportunity for professional firefighters to express and air their concerns and pose alternative solutions if the ones presented are not satisfactory.

I must say, and I respectfully do so, that I appreciate the frankness of the conversations I have had with the executive representatives of the London Professional Fire Fighters Association and certainly appreciate their continued professionalism as they debate this issue with myself and, I hope, before a standing committee of this Legislature.

Briefly, in the time I have left, and as I mentioned I have only a few minutes to speak to this legislation this afternoon, I think it's important that we recognize a very positive component of the bill, and that deals with the establishment and enhancement and strengthening of the Public Fire Safety Council. The legislation establishes the council in statute, including the ability of the council to contract in its own name, to enter into revenue-generating partnerships with the private sector and the ability to receive, retain and disburse moneys to promote fire safety in our communities. I believe these are immense improvements that will result directly in a benefit to the public and our communities at large.

The proposed changes as outlined in Bill 84 will provide an increased profile for public fire safety in this province. They will establish a public education fund for the development and implementation of province-wide public education programs at no cost to the taxpayer. Also, they will enable the council to receive private donations and engage in partnership activities, assist municipalities in the development and delivery of local public education activities, thereby reducing costs to municipal taxpayers, and certainly improve public safety by ensuring that the public receives a continued and consistent message about public safety. This will create an awareness about fire safety hazards, emphasize individual responsibility and provide appropriate information on how to ensure everyone is safe from fire and the hazards associated with it.

To conclude, it's certainly my belief that Bill 84, as we've come to know it as the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, is perhaps one of the strongest pieces of legislation of its kind in this country. Again, from a timing perspective, change is long overdue. No government has acted in almost 50 years, and certainly I commend the Solicitor General and this government in their determination to ensure that the interests of the public are protected with respect to fire safety and prevention.

Under the act municipalities will provide Ontarians with the best possible level of safety from fire in the most efficient way: by placing priority on fire prevention and public education. The act will streamline legislation

affecting fire prevention in Ontario by consolidating no less than nine separate statutes. This consolidation will provide a straightforward legislative framework for fire protection in this province. Finally, the bill demonstrates our commitment to public safety by placing a priority on fire protection services, especially fire prevention and public education.

To conclude, I think that in a very concise manner this bill provides some very necessary tools to fire services in this province, and its focus and aim on fire prevention and safety are key and important steps to the future of the public in this province and their understanding and awareness of the hazards associated with fire and its related implications.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions or comments? There being none, any further debate?

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** It's a pleasure for me to take a few minutes to speak to Bill 84, the fire services protection bill, and to resume debate on it. We have had a bit of a break, of course, since having adjourned in mid-December. I'm sure that those watching, as well as those in the Legislature today, would want us to reconfirm the points of the bill that we are all speaking to as we continue with second reading.

I want to start by pointing out some concerns we have received from the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association. I think all of us — in fact, I'm sure there's unanimous agreement on this: If this bill's going to do anything, it certainly must keep foremost its objective, that being public safety in the province of Ontario.

The concerns the professional firefighters have — I will address some of these as I go through comments — are, first, that Bill 84 puts at risk the levels of fire protection Ontarians expect and rely on. We certainly have to make sure that we do not reduce those levels of fire protection and that we do not put our citizens at risk in anything that may be contained in this bill.

The Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association also is concerned that Bill 84 puts lives at risk by slowing down response time. Their suggestion is that this bill opens the door to understaffing of firehalls and reducing the fire services in a municipality, and response time is crucial. We want to be sure and we all want to be reassured that this bill does not put that at risk. I support the view that's been put by others that this bill should go to public discussion so that anyone who has concerns about the bill might speak to those concerns.

They point out, and this is an interesting fact, that a fire can double in size and intensity with each minute of delay. We think of the very best response you might have if you live only blocks away from a fire department — the very best response will take several minutes — and how quickly a fire can grow in that length of time. They go on to say that four minutes in a smoke-filled room, deprived of oxygen, and the brain begins to die. Left too long, fires can burn out of control, destroying homes and entire communities. We certainly are aware of that and we see every day where heroic rescues are made by our fire protection services in the province, where firefighters put their own lives at risk so they may attempt to save the lives of others and, with very few exceptions, do an outstanding job. So that I may not be misunderstood, they



do an outstanding job regardless, but with very few exceptions are they unable to rescue individuals from fires. That of course depends to a great extent on the response time they're able to achieve.

Bill 84, the professional firefighters suggest, jeopardizes the teamwork that saves lives by enabling municipalities to tamper with the firefighting system used across the province today. Bill 84 throws a monkey wrench into our efficient organized system of firefighting.

It's suggested that Bill 84 puts families at risk. Communities may find themselves served by part-time firefighters who don't have the training and experience of full-time professionals, and Bill 84 means a greater risk to firefighters.

1610

So that those concerns may be answered — and I'm not suggesting that there are not parts of this bill that might be amended so that those concerns can be alleviated — we agree that a bill of this magnitude, a bill of this concern to all of us, a bill of this importance should go to public hearings so that all experienced and professional persons concerned might have an opportunity to speak to the bill.

Fire protection services include fire suppression, fire prevention, fire safety education, communication, training of persons involved in the provision of fire protection services, rescue and emergency services, and the delivery of all those services.

I come from a community where all my life fire services have been thought of as those men and women who respond to fire emergencies in our community, and when they are called it is essentially to extinguish fires. Over a period of years, we have come to know that firefighters in our communities not only fight fires but respond to calls of automobile accidents where individuals need to be removed from a damaged vehicle. It's usually the firefighters in the community who do that. Through contributions from various organizations, for example, in the small urban and rural communities, from the contributions of service organizations, fire departments and firefighters have had equipment upgraded, have been able to do this, have been able to carry out rescue operations when it comes to automobile accidents.

As well, over the years the firefighters in the communities I am familiar with along Lake Erie have been called upon to do rescue work on the lake. Fortunately, again, through the forward thinking of the communities involved, where they've supplied them with the apparatus, the boats, the equipment they need to carry out these rescues, they have been able to do that and expand their emergency services.

We all know, or we should, those of us who live on bodies of water, that fire departments are also called upon not only to carry out the initial rescue operation on water but to carry out that very unfortunate task of looking for missing persons in the lake.

All of these things have expanded well beyond what was thought of some years ago as strictly firefighting services. They have become known as being at the forefront of the protection of the citizens in their community, whether it be from fire, disaster, automobile accidents or tragedies on the lake. Firefighters are involved in all of

these operations, particularly in small urban and rural communities.

It may be that in a city like Toronto, which is also on the lake, they have specialized services. It may be that the coast guard or the armed services are more readily available to carry out some of these tasks. But in small urban and rural Ontario — and I speak more specifically of Essex county, which is surrounded on three sides by water — these responsibilities have often fallen to the local firefighters in the community. We want to continue to provide them with the proper legislation so that they can do this, with the proper equipment with which they can do this, and we certainly don't want to hinder them in any way.

It may interest some to know that in the past not all communities provided fire protection services for their residents; they haven't been required to. Certainly one aspect of this bill that I support is in part II, where it lists the responsibility of fire protection services:

"Every municipality shall,

"(a) establish a program in the municipality which must include public education with respect to fire safety and certain components of fire prevention; and

"(b) provide such other fire protection services as it determines may be necessary in accordance with its needs and circumstances."

I think it's extremely important that we now define the responsibility of municipalities to provide those kinds of services. Of course, that's easy to say. It's easy to say to municipalities, "You have to provide such services." What we'll run into, no doubt, and the municipalities will have to solve this problem, is, where do they find the money to provide those services?

With the provincial government providing less and less support financially for municipalities, this is going to put an extra burden on those municipalities. I have concern on one hand about legislation that requires a municipality to do a certain thing, to carry out a certain responsibility, but doesn't address where the funding will come from to provide those services.

In reviewing this bill, we see of course that it consolidates and repeals nine separate acts relating to fire services into one piece of legislation. The following legislation will be affected in this manner: the Accidental Fires Act; the Egress from Public Buildings Act; the Fire Accidents Act; the Fire Departments Act; the Firefighters Exemption Act; the Firefighters Protection Act, 1993; the Fire Marshals Act; the Hotel Fire Safety Act; and the Lightning Rods Act. They are all affected by this legislation. I only point that out; in fact, rather than having to go to all of these separate acts to determine responsibility and regulations in the province, it's probably best that we have one act that covers all of this.

As I mentioned earlier, part II of the bill deals with a municipality's responsibility for fire protection services. Subsection 2(1) requires every municipality to establish, at a minimum, a fire safety public education program. They may also provide other fire protection services such as fire suppression, rescue and emergency services, which I have spoken to, if they're deemed necessary. The bill also requires each municipality to appoint a fire safety



officer or a team or to establish a fire department, depending on their needs.

Fire safety officers would provide fire prevention and fire safety public education programs, fire departments would actually provide the fire suppression and other emergency services and protection services, and the fire marshal would of course be available to advise these municipalities on their needs, what level and what type of services they require.

As some help to those municipalities which have not had fire protection or emergency service protection such as this in the past, two or more municipalities may share a community safety officer or team or a fire department. Such arrangements, of course, would permit fire departments to respond to fires and emergencies regardless of the municipal boundaries.

In small urban and rural Ontario, we have had mutual aid agreements that have enabled municipalities to share these responsibilities in time of extreme emergency with adjoining municipalities. In Essex county, the mutual aid provides for a stepped response to an emergency in a community depending upon its size so that they can then call on fire departments and fire protection services in other communities to assist them.

This mutual aid agreement of course needs to be in place because at one point where you're assisting one fire department and you're moving equipment out of your own community to do this, you don't want to leave your community unprotected. In the past mutual aid agreements have been very helpful in providing enhanced protection services to various communities through these agreements.

1620

Of course, the fire marshal may also enter into agreements to provide fire protection services to areas that do not have a municipal organization. To those of us who live in the southern part of the province, or my experience in the southwestern part of the province is that we kind of take for granted from time to time that we have these municipal organizations, we're close together — in fact there's some suggestion these days, and it's being worked on, that we have too many municipal organizations — but we take for granted that it's easy to organize these kinds of things in a densely populated area, where it may not be so easy when it comes to other regions of the province.

It also should be noted that municipalities that were not previously required to provide fire services will be required to do so. It's quite unlikely that they'll receive, as I've pointed out, any additional financial support from the provincial government, so these new responsibilities need to be looked at very carefully. They need to plan for them very carefully and they therefore will welcome the opportunity, I'm sure, to share this among the various municipalities in their area.

Part III of the bill sets out the powers and duties of the fire marshal and permits the delegation of certain functions to other persons.

Part IV permits the minister to establish a fire code for Ontario.

Part V permits entry on to lands and premises in emergencies and for fire investigations. Firefighters or

other authorized persons may enter without a warrant on various lands and premises for the purpose of fighting a fire, providing rescue or emergency services or removing a serious threat to life or the environment.

Some might say that should go without question, yet I can think of an example near my own community where the fire department had some great difficulty in entering on land to put out a fire, for what reason I can't imagine, but in this case the individual simply did not want the fire department to enter on those lands. They certainly should without question and without concern about the consequences be able to do that.

Municipalities will also be able to enter into automatic aid agreements, permitting firefighting or rescue service to be provided automatically with or without a warrant on premises beyond the territorial limits of the fire department.

Entry without a warrant on lands or premises is also permitted for the purposes of investigating the cause of a fire. The use of force is not permitted for such purposes, but the section permits the fire marshal or a fire chief to apply for a search warrant if access is denied.

We have to consider that under extreme circumstances it may be that someone may not want the fire marshal's office to come on their property to investigate a fire. I certainly would hope that those cases would be extreme and small in number but, as well as with other parts of this act, the fire marshal's department has to be able to do this without concern down the road for any liability that they might have had in the past.

Part VI deals with inspections and permits the inspection without a warrant of land and premises for the purposes of assessing fire safety. The fire marshal and assistant fire marshal or a fire chief is an inspector for these purposes. I think that's one of the more important things this act allows, because if we are to assist our fire services at all in making the province and our communities a safer place to live and work, we must give them the authority to inspect residences and buildings for fire safety.

I suppose each of us who has been involved at a municipal level in the past would not be surprised that this would have to be written into the legislation because, strangely enough, there are individuals in our communities who don't see fire protection and fire safety as one of their foremost responsibilities and therefore have been reluctant to allow the fire marshal's office and/or fire chiefs and fire departments to enter upon their property and to advise them, and in some cases require them, to adhere to certain fire safety standards.

We may not appreciate always why land owners, property owners, may feel this way, but we have to support our fire services in this area because that obviously is a great step towards the objective of any of this sort of legislation, and that is that the safety of our citizens be foremost.

To that end, part VII of the bill deals with offences and enforcement, because always with the regulations that allow these fire safety codes to be put into effect we have, unfortunately, to have offences and enforcement legislation. It's an offence to hinder or obstruct the fire marshal, their assistant, or a fire chief, from the perform-



ance of their duties; to prevent an inspector from carrying out an inspection and to fail to cooperate with or mislead an inspector; to contravene the legislation or regulations thereto; or to disobey the orders of the fire marshal, their assistant or a fire chief. Individuals convicted of an offence may pay fines of up to \$10,000 or go to prison for up to a year, or both. Corporations may be fined up to \$50,000.

We have to give those kinds of tools to the fire regulators in our province so that they can in good conscience carry out their duties, and if you don't comply with those rules and regulations, then they can be supported and know that they can be supported by adequate fines and/or convictions.

I know there's much more to this bill because it is, in effect, an omnibus bill in that it covers so many pieces of previous legislation. I merely wanted to take the opportunity to point out that there are some differences between large urban municipalities and the protection services they have in place with individual groups and that fire protection, emergency services and the like need to be carried out by one department in a small community, and in many cases not by professional full-time firefighters, but by what I call professional volunteer firefighters.

I hope this bill will go to public hearings so that we will be able to hear from the municipalities who are affected and from the professional full-time firefighters in this province as to their concerns about the bill — and I'm sure their concerns will only be intended to enhance the bill — and that we also will be able to hear from those professional volunteer firefighters in our province who serve with their time, effort and energy, and indeed risk their lives for the small urban and rural municipalities in our province.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Questions or comments?

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** I appreciate the opportunity to stand after the Christmas break and get back into the fray here in this place on this bill and to congratulate the member from Windsor on the comments he made —

**Mr Crozier:** Leamington.

**Mr Martin:** Leamington.

**Mr Crozier:** Essex South.

**Mr Martin:** Essex South. Okay, let's get that straight. It's been a long holiday, I guess — and to agree with him that there are aspects of this bill that create tremendous anxiety out there in the minds and the lives of all kinds of people. Anybody in a community in this province who has a concern about the very nature of the way we respond to fires and crises of that nature in our communities will be anxious to know that this bill will diminish over time the ability of the very professional firefighters that we have in our communities today, firefighters who put their lives at risk every day of their lives to protect us, protect the general public, and who either get paid to do that or do it as a volunteer. This bill, by their own critical judgement of it, will not enhance their ability to do this job but will in fact diminish their ability to do the job.

This bill, like every other bill this government is bringing forward, is about reducing the level of service that government delivers to the people of the province. It's about saving money, and at what cost? It's about diminishing those things that we collectively have decided to pool our money to make sure every community has. The unfortunate part about all of this, as has been the case since these folks were elected in June 1995, is that there's absolutely nothing, it seems, we can do about it; it's happening and it's going to happen.

1630

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** I too listened carefully, as I did to earlier speakers not only today but before the House broke for the Christmas break. I've got to tell you, I've also listened to the speeches and the comments made by government members, government backbenchers, and I can't help but think that the government backbenchers, when they've spoken to Bill 84, have done so with sincerity in terms of their personal support — I believe that — for firefighters, but I think they've been duped on this issue, as they have on so many others. They've been sold a bill of goods by the spin doctors in their own leader's office.

I listened to my colleague from Middlesex a few minutes ago as a government member, a very eloquent speech. He waxed on about his support for firefighters, and I have no quarrel with that. The problem is that Bill 84 doesn't do the things that he and other Tory backbenchers say it does, and it does a whole lot of things that they're afraid to acknowledge. This bill is not a pro-public-safety bill; it's certainly not a pro-firefighter bill; it's certainly not a pro-community bill.

This is all part and parcel of the agenda that we've witnessed here for, yes, a year and a half now. I suppose the key legislation was Bill 26. But we see by way of Bill 84 and then today by way of Bill 104, which as you know the opposition members voted against even on first reading, the beginning of the end, an end that's going to be coming very soon to public services, including public firefighting services, public professional firefighting services, here in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions or comments? The member for Essex South, you can sum up.

**Mr Crozier:** As I said at the outset, I just appreciate the opportunity to be able to take a few minutes today to speak to the bill and to emphasize that it's of such importance and concern not just to the citizens of the province and not just to the government and/or the municipalities. This bill is of great concern to the thousands of firefighters across this province who each day in one form or another serve us and who in many instances put their lives on the line for us. It's important that we give the opportunity for each of those groups, being the firefighters and the municipalities themselves and the citizens, to give their input to such an important bill. So I would hope that at the conclusion of second reading and in the break this spring — I don't know whether it will be the summer break now that we're into our spring session, but that we be given the opportunity to debate the seriousness of this bill in a public forum before it's passed in its final form.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?



**Mr Kormos:** The spring session is what this was referred to as. I beg to differ, sir. This is winter. Trust me. Down where I come from in Welland, we know it's winter. It's cold. It's the winter session, and then following this will be the spring session and then the summer session and then the fall session. Then we'll start the winter session again.

I suppose it's a little bit interesting that this is being called for debate again on the same day that Bill 104 is read for first reading. I was telling you a few minutes ago, Speaker, about how Bill 104 is part of that succession of bills that seem to have had their foundation laid by Bill 26, which seems like a horribly long time ago, quite frankly. The last year and a half has not gone by quickly by any stretch of the imagination. Day in and day out we've seen public services and communities under attack on an escalating level.

I've talked to people who tell me they supported the Conservatives in the last provincial election but at a level which they never anticipated or they never intended to endorse by virtue of their having elected Conservative members to the Legislature. I find it remarkable that we are even beginning to hear in some of the bastions of support — they were the bastions of support for the Common Sense Revolution — some of the radio talk shows, which were very critical and had been throughout the term of the last government and very supportive of Tory candidates, similarly now find themselves expressing increasing concern.

Again, I don't want to in any way suggest that the nature of the weekend in terms of the weather and the snow was not fierce in northern Ontario — I'm sure it was — but I'll tell you what we learned down in Welland as a result of what has been happening to funding for municipalities. What happened in Welland this past weekend after a heavy snowfall, much of it what they call the lake effect coming up from Buffalo, an intensely heavy snowfall blocking roads and roadways, was that the people of the community became aware in a very acute way of the policy that had been adopted and had been forced upon Welland city council last year.

This policy dictated that there wasn't going to be snow removal on diked areas or during any period of time when there was a requirement to pay workers overtime other than for bus routes. So down on Bald Street — Bald Street is a side street; that's where a whole lot of good people live; I live there too — and all the other side streets across the city — Griffith Street, Regent Street, the whole nine yards, Springhead Gardens — if it wasn't a bus route, it wasn't plowed. Even this morning when I left Welland, the street remained unplowed.

I suppose for me and my neighbours, the Wightmans or Ross Dickie and his wife across the road, it was inconvenient, but when I looked at the materials I had gathered on Bill 84 and reflected on what, let's say, firefighters or their colleagues in public safety, in public protection — ambulance workers, paramedic types — would have to confront if they were called out to an address on one of these side streets that hadn't been plowed, it would have surely hindered, inevitably delayed and possibly significantly obstructed the ability of

firefighters or medical care people, ambulance workers or police to do their job.

Again, this is in southern Ontario. We from the south can't begin to imagine what I'm sure are similar cutbacks in municipalities across the north, what they have done for those sorts of essential services and the delivery of those services in places where they laugh at our snowfall and say: "What are you moaning about? You put it in four-wheel drive."

I reflected on that over the weekend and as I was driving up here to Toronto. As a matter of fact, I spoke with a couple of city councillors. We were over at the CAW hall on Friday night because Stelco as you know has been on strike. The Stelco workers, for several weeks now, have been fighting a company that's dug its heels in, that feels it's received licence, a blank cheque from this government, to treat workers any way it wants to, that forced them into a strike position, not negotiating with them, and is denying them the right to even a basic decent pension and the most modest of demands for wage increases.

1640

As a matter of fact, I met Cindy Forster, councillor for ward 3, because she was over at the CAW hall. There was a spaghetti dinner on Friday evening from 4 to 7. The CAW, that local, is going to be holding these dinners for their workers and their families every Friday as often as they can. The Commissio Food Terminal donated the food and the workers and their partners, their spouses and their families, prepared themselves a spaghetti dinner. That's when the snowfall became acute. It was Friday afternoon. I drove over to the old UE hall, it's now the CAW hall, down on Steel Street because I wanted to just say hello to these people and wish them a happy new year. But that's where the snow conditions struck me. Mind you, they'd only just begun, but that's when I first spoke to one of our city councillors, who explained that the city of Welland was forced, because of this province's cutbacks, into suspending snow removal on anything that wasn't a bus route and only to permit snow removal on the balance of the streets during Monday to Friday, I suppose, normal daily working hours.

I appreciate that you've got to push or help your neighbour push his truck out. I don't have to help my neighbour, he's got a four-wheel drive, but somebody has to help me push my truck out of a snow bank. That in itself isn't a problem. But when you think about the elderly, when you think about people with disabilities, when you think about how unsafe it is for children travelling about, going to school, going to their friend's home, going to the Y, what have you, to have to walk through snowdrifts and expose themselves to cars or vehicles slipping and sliding down the street, it's no longer just an inconvenience.

A whole lot of talk has been made over the last year and a half by any number of opposition members. Our members from the north have raised significantly with the Minister of Transportation the impact of a reduced — and we're not talking here about secondary streets within the city, we're talking about highways that passenger vehicles have to share with big transport trucks that are travelling internationally and working on tough time schedules.



You've got to share those same highways, not residential streets but major highways, the only route available. School buses have to share them too, discharging kids. You've been up there; you know what it's like. There's a home here and then a plot of land and home over there and so on. So this weekend, especially contemplating the type of legislation we were going to be confronted with here today not only by way of Bill 104 — wait till tomorrow.

There's a bomb that's going to be dropped down in Oakville. The Minister of Community and Social Services has got a press conference down there over on Bronte Road. I'm told that at the regional headquarters, at a press conference where it's going to be Nightmare at Queen's Park, Part II — today was part I — we're going to find out exactly what this government has in mind in terms of downloading the cost of funding general welfare assistance on to municipalities, a program that's provincially mandated. The act is there; the General Welfare Assistance Act is there. The municipality is going to have no choice about whether or not it's going to administer it or whether it's going to pay for it. It's simply going to be told, "You've got to pay for it."

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** It's a new hard service.

**Mr Kormos:** Yes, it was described today by the Minister of Municipal affairs as a hard service. Hard service, my foot. Give me a break. It's not a hard service. He's the minister. He should know better than that.

We're going to see the downloading of general welfare assistance, we're going to see the downloading of what we perceive to be, I suppose with any numbers of descriptions, municipal health care, long-term care, the sorts of things we want our folks, our grandparents, to be in in terms of regional seniors' homes, on to municipal property taxpayers, and we're going to see an attack, because that's what Bill 104 does. I'm going to get to Bill 84, Speaker. That's what Bill 104 does, the Minister of Education's bill today, part of the Premier's grand scheme for what is going to be a very different type of Ontario than our parents or grandparents worked so hard to build.

Bill 84 has been before the House for a considerable period of time; not a whole lot of debate yet. Our critic, Marion Boyd, only today finished her initial responses as the critic for the Ministry of the Solicitor General. I tell you, and I think I can speak for a whole lot of the members of this House, although it hasn't been on the floor for debate a whole lot yet, it has certainly attracted attention from people across this province and it certainly has attracted attention from firefighters, their families, people who are familiar with how important firefighters are to our communities and people who care about public health and safety. It's attracted a whole lot of attention from people who care about free collective bargaining rights and how this government once again is attacking collective bargaining, as it did in Bill 26, as it has been through the course of any number of labour bills presented by it and as it continues to do with Bill 84.

I might make mention of some of the letters that I receive, but I've also, as I think everybody here has, been visited by any number of firefighters. I tell you, they're

welcome. I've been visited by them at home down in Welland, down on Bald Street, in the constituency office, when I've attended at firehalls for any number of functions, and here at Queen's Park. I remember one of the people who spent a whole lot — as a matter of fact, for a long time, he's felt comfortable and free in giving me insight and advice. Henry Labenski down in Welland, who's now the vice-president for the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association in districts 1 to 4, which includes Welland and Niagara Falls, has been one of the guys who, not only with Bill 84, but every time an issue has come up around firefighters, has never hesitated to make sure that I understand the issue from the point of view of professional firefighters, those hardworking women and men. He certainly did that, along with his colleagues from both the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association and the Welland fire department.

Down in the city of Welland we've got a city council that, because this government has crippled it, has cut it off at the knees, has said, "We don't care about local governance and we don't care about the integrity of municipalities and we don't care about community" — that's what this government has said to cities like Welland and Thorold and Pelham. City council is being forced into contemplating the closure of one of the few firehalls we have. Those firehalls were built by Welland taxpayers, by hardworking people, by people who work in factories and hospitals and schools and who pay taxes knowing that those taxes are being used to protect all of the community, not just themselves, and for the betterment of all the community.

I appreciate that Ms Boyd canvassed the legislation very meticulously, as she is inclined to do. But I tell you, the proposition as put forth — and I'm in accord, I agree, it's undeniable to understand that this bill that dares title itself as being — sorry, Speaker?

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** Look, Speaker, you understand I got a little bit of heat with the Speaker earlier today and I wanted to make sure I wasn't offending you.

This bill dares call itself or title itself as being a bill concerned with public safety. One of the critical observations you've got to make is that this bill is going to undermine public safety. Firefighters have been working for a long time to develop concepts of minimum staffing, right? So you've got a reasonable number of staff on at any given point in time, and it becomes all the more crucial — and again, Toronto is not like the rest of Ontario, but the rest of Ontario in some respects is going to be inclined to become more and more like Toronto. Heck, 20 or 25 years ago, Welland didn't have high-rise apartment buildings. Firefighters didn't have to concern themselves with the very special issues that are involved in high-rises. Yes, Welland does have high-rise apartments; so does Thorold, the seniors' residence. You've got multi-floor buildings, no longer just one- and two-level buildings where the demands on firefighting services are diminished.

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Welland and Thorold are towns that have economies based on industry; granted, industry that's not as comfortable in the last year and a half as it should have been or



could have been or would have been had it not been for the Tories, but industry that's still struggling along. Again, this puts very special demands on firefighters. This makes for an entirely new world for firefighters.

Many people have perhaps a very narrow vision of what firefighting consists of. You've got to spend some time with firefighters going to some of their annual meetings where they recount the number of calls they had that year and where those calls were to, and understand that they're involved in far more than just putting out fires. They become part of the first-line response to personal trauma, physical trauma, motor vehicle accidents, heart attacks, strokes, falls, serious ones. They become the first line of response, and people understand that down in Welland-Thorold; of course they do.

They are there when it comes to fire prevention, and that's what the firefighters have addressed with all of us. Some of us have listened. I'm afraid that others haven't. I'm afraid that some government backbenchers have simply tuned them out.

One of the things that the firefighters told, I'm confident at this point, every member of this Legislature, or at least every member who would accommodate them with a visit — there may well have been some government members who wouldn't accommodate members of the professional firefighters from their community or from the two associations, wouldn't have accommodated them by way of a visit, yes, for the purpose of lobbying. But among other things, this bill is a betrayal of firefighters by Premier Mike Harris. They've got a videotape. Boy, have I become familiar with videotapes over the last short while. They don't lie. They've got a videotape of the Premier, Mike Harris, telling them that they would be consulted. They, not the fire marshal for Ontario, not the bureaucracy at the Ministry of the Solicitor General, not their chiefs of fire departments, but they, the professional firefighters, would be consulted.

They videotaped it. Pretty slick, if you want my view, because Mike Harris — I'm sorry, the Premier, because he is the Premier for the moment — can't run and hide from that. It's one I'm sure he wishes would simply evaporate, because there are other videotapes around. There's a videotape of the family support plan that I'm sure the Attorney General simply wishes would evaporate. But no, there are too many copies now. He can erase and erase and erase, and there is still going to be that next copy of the videotape of the family support plan left, just like there's going to be the next copy of the videotape of Mike Harris, as he was then, campaigning — and by God, he went after firefighters during the election campaign. You know that, don't you? I understand. He campaigned, Speaker, and you know it because you saw him doing it, with firefighters. Mike Harris told firefighters they would be consulted before anything akin to Bill 84 was going to be put forward before this Legislature.

What's going to happen is that notwithstanding firefighters' efforts, and they have through any number of means, through their collective bargaining process, yes, through the grievance process, with varying degrees of success — they understand the need to understand the concept of minimum staffing. Firefighters know that Bill 84 is going to permit municipalities to understaff fire

departments. What that's going to mean is tragedy. What that's going to mean is not just loss of property, but physical danger for members of our communities. It's going to mean unnecessary deaths, because the understaffing that's going to flow, the reduction in fire services in a municipality that's going to be permitted by this bill is going to mean needless deaths of Ontarians, deaths that are going to be mourned but for which the responsibility is going to have to be placed with this government.

The bill also permits the introduction of so-called part-time firefighters — again, with loopholes so wide you could drive a Mack truck through them — who are going to be undertrained, who are not going to have the experience of full-timers and are going to be called out and used in the stead of the full-time professional firefighters who serve our communities now.

We can talk about the threat to the public health and the public wellbeing and the public safety, but let's also talk about the fact that this bill, because of the way it's going to permit and encourage and facilitate understaffing, is also going to put firefighters at risk. The firefighters are going to be called out to respond to situations of great danger and great risk without being fully staffed.

Just as Bill 26, the foundation for privatization, among other things, is complemented by Bill 104 today — because if Bill 104 isn't designed, among other things, to facilitate the privatization of education in this province, nothing ever has been or will be. We know it. I've been on the phone all day talking to people from Welland-Thorold who have heard the news reports of the Minister of Education's little speech in downtown Toronto today, and they know what's happening. Some of them have been teachers. Most of the teachers haven't been able to call me; they've been working in schools. The ones who have been able to call me are among the hundreds of teachers in Niagara region alone who have been fired, laid off, given the pink slip by this government.

Parents have called me, and, more tragically, grandparents, because they understand. Those parents, and more important the grandparents, know how hard they worked and how much they sacrificed to build public education. They know it. Don't think it wasn't done without struggle and without sacrifice. They built public education, because some of these grandparents — more than a few — are, oh, too familiar with societies wherein not every child has the right to attend school. Only the rich kids can go to school or only the richest kids can get the better education.

Friday afternoon I was over at Thorold high school talking to the grade 10 class there, and I canvassed the class, so enlarged in size from last year because of the funding cuts this government has imposed on education in Ontario, reaching all the way down and through the riding of Welland-Thorold. I talked to kids, bright young people who know that their class is larger this year than it was last year, and they know why too: because this government doesn't give a tinker's dam about public education. It not only doesn't give a tinker's dam about public education, but it's going to do everything it has to do as quickly as it can do it to ensure that we have not just two-tiered health care in Ontario but two-tiered education.



But the very rich, the ones who are getting the biggest tax break, being funded by the poor and the poorest and by their children and by abused women — it's being funded by abused women. It's being funded by kids who were denied junior kindergarten. It's being funded by day care workers, who remain among the poorest and lowest-paid skilled professional workers in our society. It's being paid for by health care workers who are losing their jobs in city after city as this government shuts down hospital after hospital, like the Hotel Dieu in St Catharines and like the Port Colborne General Hospital in Port Colborne, hospitals that were built not by any government, certainly not by this government, but they were built by working people — \$5, \$10, \$20 a week.

1700

I remember those days in the Welland County General Hospital. Workers were asked to subscribe at their workplace, at their plant — secretaries, office workers from their offices — and five and ten bucks a week, when that was being done back in the 1950s and early 1960s, was a lot of dough. It really was; it was a lot of money. But people paid it because they wanted to help build their community. They wanted to strengthen neighbourhoods and strengthen the community because they understood that when you work together, when you work cooperatively, when you share resources, everybody can benefit.

This government isn't interested in sharing resources because it doesn't want everybody to benefit. This government wants the very rich to be the beneficiaries of what will continue to be sacrifices imposed on them, mind you, by the government, of workers and professionals, be they in health care, in education or in firefighting services.

Not only were firefighters never consulted by Mike Harris as he promised them in the video that was displayed at the firefighter conference for April 1995, they're still waiting to hear from him. Firefighters are sitting by the phone waiting to hear from Mike Harris to see whether he lied to them or whether he's simply being negligent in not getting back to the phone quickly enough. I know what they believe in their hearts and I believe you share that, because it's again the irresistible conclusion as to whether he lied to them or was simply negligent in getting on the phone to them.

During the Crombie commission, during the Crombie inquiry, hearings — well, I suppose they were — commissioned by this government, the Who Does What, firefighters weren't consulted by Harris, weren't consulted by the Solicitor General, weren't consulted by Crombie.

This bill will, as I say, encourage and facilitate and indeed dictate that there be increased and increasing privatization of fire services — firefighting, fire protection services. There will be an increase in the utilization of part-time firefighters to the jeopardy of all involved: members of the community as well as firefighters.

There are going to be increased hours of work permitted that can be imposed on firefighters. There are going to be massive exclusions from bargaining unit. This bill gives municipal employers or "any other private employer deemed to be so by the minister" the power to

simply exclude people from the collective bargaining agreement.

I suppose one of the penultimate indignities imposed here is that this bill purports to ban the right of firefighters to strike when firefighters have never struck in this community but have, in good faith, relied upon the collective bargaining process and from time to time arbitration, and recognized that they have held the safety of the community in higher regard than their own personal interests.

The fact that firefighters have never struck in this province simply wasn't good enough for Mike Harris. He's going to teach these people, these committed women and men, who's boss. He's going to show them what the toe of a jackboot feels like and he's going to take away their right to strike. I tell you that governments in other societies at other times have tried the same exercise. You can kick around workers and professional people like firefighters for a while, but then they're going to react.

If this government doesn't at least concede to the modest request for full-fledged, wide-open hearings on Bill 84 so that the folly of this exercise can be exposed, it's putting people and virtually every community in this province at risk because firefighters may well feel themselves goaded to engage in various work actions. I'm going to support them if they decide to take that course. It will be their right to decide. I'm not telling you they should, I'm not telling you they will, but I suspect that's going to be a consideration, and I'm prepared to stand side by side with firefighters just as I am with teachers, with nurses, with workers when they're getting beat up on by this government and their cronies.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. The member's time is up. Questions or comments?

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** I would like to comment on something the member for Welland-Thorold said early in his comments. It didn't deal directly with the changes to the Fire Departments Act, but it did deal with the whole question of why all this downloading is taking place. I suppose the average viewer out there may be asking: "Why are people so excited about it? If we take the education taxes off the property tax roll and give municipalities more responsibility for welfare costs, for costs like policing, libraries, provincial offences, transportation services and ambulance services, what is wrong with that?"

What is wrong with it is this: I think the taxpayers out there know that property taxes and business taxes being paid in our municipalities are known as regressive taxes, and they're set once a year and a municipality has to live on that funding, whatever mill rate it happens to set.

The problem with a lot of these new services that will be downloaded on to municipalities is that quite often they are costs that cannot be predicted accurately at the beginning of the year. Second, they are quite often costs associated with catastrophes that may strike municipalities. There may be major layoffs, there may be plant closures, there may be all sorts of reasons, and as a result these kinds of social services will all of a sudden become much more meaningful and much more needed in that municipality and cost a lot more. The real question then becomes, will the municipalities at that given moment



have the ability to pay for those services? That is the real problem with having the soft-core social services being paid for out of municipal taxes.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** I want to congratulate my friend and colleague from Welland-Thorold for his usual eloquence around most issues, but in particular on the very issue being debated here.

He touched on the matter of consultation. I remind the Tories, because they might have forgotten, about what Mike Harris said before the election about consulting. This is what he promised the firefighters: "No changes will be made under a Harris government until such a time as your members have been thoroughly consulted."

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** The big lie.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Lake Nipigon.

**Mr Marchese:** "We will insist that all change be fully costed, both from the point of view of the workers as well as —"

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Fort York, take your seat for a moment, please. Member for Lake Nipigon, would you please withdraw that?

**Mr Pouliot:** I will withdraw, Madam Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you.

**Mr Marchese:** I remind his colleagues about the promise Mike made: "No changes will be made under a Harris government until such a time as your members have been thoroughly consulted." That's what he said then. The problem with this government is that it's all rhetoric, not just before the election but during and after. We're living through this all the time. They talk about consulting, except they won't consult on matters where there's disagreement out there in the public. That's why they refute and reject a referendum in Metro. We think it's abominable.

What is concerted here is that this Conservative government is linking very closely with the big banks and the financial sector in general and the developers and the rich, privileged few in Ontario. That agenda — we see it here; we see it in Manitoba — is an assault on workers. They're taking the right to strike from these workers and they want to privatize their services. This is a shameful act and a shameful bill by this government.

1710

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** The last speech was a very good one in many ways, I thought, but it didn't fully deal with why we're really dealing with this bill, which is of course to pay for the tax cut, a tax cut which will cost the government some \$5 billion per year when it's fully implemented, a tax cut which will result in far more cuts to education, to health care, to consumer protection, to environmental protection than anybody could possibly believe in this province.

I know even some of my good friends in the Conservative caucus themselves are very concerned now about the implications of the bizarre tax scheme, because they say, "Why else would we be bringing forward a piece of legislation such as this?" a piece of legislation which is going to hurt firefighters in this province, which is breaking trust with a group which has been so supportive of our communities over the years, an anti-labour piece of legislation at a time when the government has already been involved in anti-labour legislation. They're asking

why these things are happening. I fully understand their concern.

I'm glad the member brought forward some of the good arguments against this legislation, which I was hoping the government would withdraw. Now, I know Tuesday morning the caucus meets. My friend from Rexdale will be speaking to the powers that be. He will be suggesting that the government withdraw this legislation, that it make significant changes to the legislation and that it bring it back. He'll also be urging the government not to proceed with the bizarre tax scheme which is going to force a Conservative government to borrow \$5 billion a year to give a tax cut to the richest people in our society.

**Mr Bisson:** I thought it was quite interesting how the member for Welland-Thorold brought together all of the various issues that are connected to this one piece of legislation, because when you look at it, it is all connected. What this government is doing is saying: "We are trying to play a shell game. We're trying to tell the people of Ontario that we're going to give you a 30% tax break and make ourselves the good guys of the province of Ontario."

But we all know what's really happening, as the member for Welland-Thorold pointed out. As the government is trying to give that 30% tax cut to the people of the province, it is sticking its hand into the pockets of the taxpayers of this province by doing a number of things such as eliminating a number of school boards in Ontario.

The Minister of Education and Training stood in this House today and said he was going to make tremendous changes in education. Well, tremendous they are. Those changes are going to mean, for example, that in north-eastern Ontario, instead of having local representation on school boards such as we have now, we are going to have a superboard that will run from the counties of Muskoka all the way up to the tip of James Bay. That is a humongous piece of Ontario. In fact, it is larger than most European nations. We will be running that with a school board with a few elected officials, which I presume would mean that a number of those communities wouldn't even have an elected trustee, because the school board will not be able to seat as many people as you have within that jurisdiction.

Why is the government doing this? It's quite simple. The government is going to be taking away local control from the school boards and giving it to itself, the provincial government, so it can move ahead with giving people a tax break but at the same time change our system of education so that those with the dollars in the long run will be able to send their kids to private charter schools and those of us who don't have money are going to have to put our kids in a system of public education which will be greatly underfunded and greatly in need of being able to support the needs of our kids. That's really what this government is doing. I'd like to commend the member for Welland-Thorold for bringing that to our attention.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Welland-Thorold, you can sum up.

**Mr Kormos:** Of course, appreciation to the member for Kingstom and The Islands, the member for Fort York, the member for Cochrane South and the member for St



Catharines for having listened to what I was saying, as I know you did, Speaker.

**Interjection:** Nobody else did.

**Mr Kormos:** Well, that's interesting. There's a Tory over there saying, "Nobody else did." I have no doubt that the Tories weren't interested in what I was saying, no doubt about that at all, because the fact is that not only do they not listen to me, but they don't listen to the people in their riding, they don't listen to the nurses and the teachers and the firefighters and the hardworking people of their respective ridings. They're not listening to the farmers. They're not listening to the mothers of little children who are being denied day care.

I'll tell you who they do listen to, though. Their rich friends, the corporate bosses, the Conrad Blacks of the world have the ears of this gang. Let me tell you, I've got folks in Welland-Thorold and elsewhere in the province who wanted to hear about the tax break. You see, when a corporate vice-president, when the big wheels at the Royal Bank or the TD Bank or the Bank of Nova Scotia that have been making billions of dollars get tax breaks, it's going to be \$100,000, \$200,000 and \$300,000 a year.

What's this government done? They've imposed more user fees and more economic hardship on the working people of places like the Niagara region, on the seniors and retirees. They're going to be shutting down seniors' homes, we know that's going to happen, just as they shut down hospitals and just as they've been shutting down classrooms.

This government has moved from diabolical to evil in its motive. We look at the people they're prepared to victimize, to pay off, to grease, their rich corporate friends, and that demonstrates evil in the most profound way.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk):** I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak today about this government's fire prevention bill, which will enable municipalities across Ontario, both rural and urban, to have the best possible level of protection from fire.

I understand that Bill 84 is the strongest fire safety legislation proposed in Canada, making Ontario a fire safety leader in this country. Today I want to draw the members' attention to a number of provisions in the bill which will help protect public safety. I also want to respond to some points raised by the member for London Centre and other members in the House today during earlier debates on this bill.

**Mr Pouliot:** Like a bunch of vultures sitting on a branch.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Lake Nipigon, come to order. Continue. Go ahead.

**Mr Pouliot:** I'm being provoked.

**Interjection.**

**The Acting Speaker:** Take your seat for a moment. Member for Lake Nipigon, would you please come to order. At the end of his comments you may make a two-minute comment in response. Member for Norfolk, continue.

**Mr Barrett:** This is a piece of legislation that's been a long time in coming. I understand there have been no updates to many parts of this law dealing with fire-

fighting since 1948. I believe that most Ontario taxpayers would agree that almost 50 years is a long time to wait to modernize legislation which, once Bill 84 is passed and implemented, will allow fire services to be delivered more efficiently and effectively.

Extensive consultations have been held for a number of years with firefighters' unions, municipalities and fire chiefs to examine ways that municipalities and the government can provide enhanced and cost-effective fire protection right across the province. The fact that this government had the courage to make these changes after previous governments studied the problem but took no action shows the government's commitment to public safety.

This bill provides tools to the local municipal governments, which are better able to reflect local taxpayers' concerns, which will in turn allow them to make sure that fire safety services are provided in the safest, most efficient way possible.

I wish to make mention of volunteers, and I represent the rural riding of Norfolk. In my riding fire protection is provided mainly by volunteers, in fact, solely by volunteer firefighters. I'd like to take a moment to recognize the enormous contribution that volunteer firefighters make in keeping all of us and our families safe.

I have lived on a farm all my life and have witnessed first hand the impressive job that volunteer firefighters have done to protect people, in fighting fires not only in houses but barns and farm shops. On occasion volunteer firefighters in my area have demonstrated bravery by rescuing farm animals, and there are some unique situations in rural areas we have yet to hear in this debate.

I have the utmost respect and admiration for volunteer firefighters in my own community and across Ontario, whether they're fighting barn fires — unfortunately my family has lost a number of barns over the years — or doing accident rescue, as was alluded to across the way, or for that matter in certain ceremonial purposes, marching in Remembrance Day memorial parades.

I understand that approximately 18,000 of the 26,000 firefighters in Ontario are actually volunteers. As our parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General pointed out previously, volunteer firefighters represent a \$1-billion asset for this province, and this government intends to make sure that the volunteer system is not only supported but also enhanced by Bill 84.

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I have also seen the remarkable effort that volunteer firefighters put into fighting the Hagersville tire fire which occurred in my riding a number of years ago. I clearly see how important it is that these volunteers be given more opportunity in the areas of training and public safety under this particular bill.

For example, the mandate of the office of the fire marshal will be strengthened to provide better training for volunteers. This gives volunteer firefighters the support they need to do the best job they can in preventing fires through public education and in the practical training required to effectively fight those fires.

In addition, the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council will help support the volunteer system by making



sure volunteer firefighters have the materials they need for public education.

Through restructuring, volunteers will have better access to training programs and facilities. Municipalities themselves will also be able to provide more support and assistance to the volunteer system as a result of this bill.

Earlier I mentioned the issue of public fire safety education. The fact is that fire safety prevention and education save lives, and Bill 84 recognizes this. That is why the bill expands the role of the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council in educating the public on fire safety so they can be more effective in preventing fires from occurring in the first place.

For example, statistics compiled over the past 25 years clearly show that fire fatalities have declined due to improved education and prevention. Between 1985 and 1994 there was a 19% decrease in the number of fatal fires for this very reason. In addition, over 30 coroner's juries have recommended that more attention be paid to fire prevention through public education.

We cannot stop now. We must continue to allow the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council to give the municipalities and firefighters themselves the tools they need to continue and improve fire prevention.

I would also point out that Bill 84 also improves public safety for all municipalities, including those in isolated rural and northern communities. For the first time legislation provides unincorporated northern communities with the authority they need for effective fire prevention. The bill gives them the means to take advantage of technology and places more emphasis on early warning systems and escape plans through effective prevention and public education.

I would ask, Speaker, that you not take my word for this. I wish to make reference to a letter I received, one of many from volunteer firefighters, to hear what they are saying themselves about Bill 84. What I have found in reading these letters is that the tone is generally supportive. I want to take a moment to read a letter, one of several, from the vice-president of the Volunteer Firefighters Association of Ontario, and I quote:

"I am a member of your constituency and I have had a chance to review Bill 84. As a firefighter in our community, I am pleased with this legislative initiative and sincerely hope the members of the provincial Legislature will see their way clear to pass Bill 84 as soon as possible.

"The fire service has changed drastically in the last 50 years and we need the legislative leadership provided in Bill 84 if we are to continue to offer the most flexible and progressive public fire protection service to our citizens."

So we are hearing from volunteer firefighters and others that Bill 84 will make changes which are long overdue in Ontario and that these changes will result in increased public safety at reasonable cost to taxpayers.

At this point I would like to change direction and briefly address a number of points raised in earlier debates on Bill 84, debates that occurred in December of last year. At that time, I believe it was the member for London South who asked why there were no improvements made around the fire code. I believe she raised the

issue of smoke alarms and why they were not made mandatory for all homes as part of Bill 84. As recently as today the member for London South raised the spectre of people being put at risk and also made mention of her concern for response time.

I want to let the member and other members know that the government can at any time amend regulations such as the fire code without introducing new legislation in the House. I am informed that the ministry, in cooperation with the office of the fire marshal, is currently reviewing a number of regulatory proposals to further improve public safety, including proposals to expand the requirements of the fire code regarding the use of smoke alarms. So our priority indeed is public safety. There are different mechanisms to achieve this goal. Regulations are an important mechanism and so is this particular legislation.

The issue of what is being done about certain recommendations from coroners' inquests was raised. I understand the office of the fire marshal reviews all coroner's recommendations related to fire safety in order to identify further improvements that can be made to the fire code. I am advised that the Ministry of the Solicitor General is currently reviewing a variety of such proposed fire code amendments. I should also mention that Bill 84 quite clearly gives the Solicitor General the authority to make fire code regulations. Currently, all regulations must be approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. This change should, if anything, reduce the time required to introduce changes to the fire code and, as a result, help make sure it's kept up to date. This should also help protect the public.

I mentioned the concern we've heard today concerning response time. This brings to mind the concept of automatic aid. Automatic aid is a priority of this government. When lives are at stake, it really shouldn't matter which department responds. It's really only common sense that whoever can get there faster should respond. We expect and are confident that municipalities will work together to ensure public safety and to continue to build on the strengths of the past with respect to automatic aid.

By way of example, the cities of Toronto and York are an example of confusion that currently exists regarding municipal borders. Both cities have their own respective fire stations and equipment, some being immediately on the municipal border. If a fire occurred in the city of York, the Toronto fire department might be able to respond faster than York's, depending on the area. However, the way things are currently, Toronto wouldn't be able to respond to that fire. These changes will make it easier for municipalities to arrange automatic aid efforts with their neighbours.

If a fire occurred in a specific area of one city, a neighbouring fire department might be able to respond faster, but the way things are now they wouldn't be able to.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Barrett:** This is ridiculous, and I agree with the member across the way.

I'm pleased to say that approximately 15 fire departments in Essex county are very close to finalizing an automatic aid agreement that could serve as a model for the province as a whole, and they hope to initiate this



agreement early in the new year. Through hard work and diligence by municipalities, fire departments and professional fire departments, mutual aid agreements have worked well in the past, as has been pointed out, and we are confident municipalities will continue and enhance such partnerships to ensure the safety of all Ontarians.

There are a number of concerns that I have heard from members opposite about labour provisions of Bill 84. This refers to part IX of the bill. I want to indicate that the Solicitor General has met personally on a number of occasions with professional firefighters and fire chiefs to discuss these issues. I also understand that the government is committed to holding public hearings as part of the legislative process after the second reading stage has been completed.

As you can see, it is this government's goal to create a whole new framework for fire protection in Ontario. This obviously requires updating and modernizing many aspects of Ontario legislation, including labour law, for firefighters. I must stress that the key issue here isn't labour relations or job security; the key issue is public safety and community security. Public safety is the number one issue here.

I would like to think that firefighters and their unions would be supportive of legislation that enhances the safety of both the public and firefighters. I appreciate that some professional firefighters may be concerned with part of the bill; however, we can look at this specifically. I am confident that once all the stakeholders have a look at the package as a whole, they will appreciate that these changes are fair and reasonable and will ensure public safety. This is everyone's goal. The changes in this bill will bring fire service more in line with other labour legislation in the province.

The concerns of professional firefighters regarding bargaining, hours of work and other matters of concern to them will, I'm certain, be raised in committee hearings on this bill.

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Finally, in conclusion, I would like to reiterate what I believe are the key themes of Bill 84. The bill is about better protecting public safety by giving municipalities the flexibility they need to better deliver fire services across the province. With this bill, municipalities will play a key role in fire service delivery.

The Fire Protection and Prevention Act is part of the government's municipal restructuring program, giving municipalities the flexibility to arrange fire protection services based on their own needs and circumstances. A key component of their responsibilities will be to provide mandatory fire prevention and public education. Meanwhile, the primary role of the province will be to provide leadership and to support to these municipalities. To enhance these efforts, the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council will support municipalities with fire prevention and public education materials.

Bill 84 also provides the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council with expanded abilities to raise funds: funds for better fire prevention programs, funds for public education. Finally, Bill 84 will help volunteer firefighters, such as those I have referred to resident in my riding, to

have better access to training and better access to prevention programs.

I just want to say that I've heard the strong message from the volunteer firefighters in my riding. I hope all members will be supporting passage of Bill 84 so that this important bill can be implemented, most importantly to enhance public safety.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** I listened very attentively to the honourable member. What he hasn't said, really, is what the great rush is for your ramming this bill through. To begin with, I presume the only thing you could say about this is the consistently very undemocratic way you have governed since your party came to power. Bill 26 was rammed through without any of your members understanding it. Bill 84 is the same stuff. Bill 86, which you introduced today, is the same. You want to ram things through.

I have spoken to many of the firefighters. I don't know who you're speaking to. They don't like this bill. They will not support this bill. If you want to hear more, give them the public hearings they are asking for so they can come before you. They seem unable to convince or even to meet with your members when they try to come forward to say, "Here is our position." You haven't heard them, because they have come to me and have come to many of my colleagues and expressed their concern about the way you're conducting this legislation. They don't like it.

He went on and on that the volunteers have done a tremendous job and what have you, but what you have done is excluded them from all of this. In the collective bargaining situation, they have done the most honourable thing that anyone could want: They have cooperated very well and have never struck in all the years they have been around. Now you're bringing in laws to say, "You can't strike." You're the same individuals who are saying, "There are too many rules and regulations governing this province." Then you turn around and put in rules and regulations and laws that are not required, just because you want to upset a number of people and flex your muscles to say: "We are the government. We don't have to listen to the people." As a matter of fact, you can see that you'd rather the people go away, the volunteers go away, before you can act.

**Mr Bisson:** I listened quite intently to the member for Norfolk's comments on this bill in regard to fire safety. What was interesting was that a common thread ran through that entire speech from one end to the other; that is, the emphasis on volunteer firefighters. I don't mean to demean volunteer firefighters, because as do the member for Norfolk and other members of this Legislature, we recognize that volunteers make up the majority of the firefighting services in Ontario and do a good job.

For the record, I would also like to say that volunteer firefighters, under this bill, will get more training, and we're not opposed to that. What really scares me is that the emphasis is all on volunteers. It's almost as if the member is saying it is a bad thing to be a full-time firefighter. Full-time firefighters are not wanted and needed by this government, and some of the indication I would have is that they want to move on to private



firefighters, as the member for Sault Ste Marie has just mentioned.

It's interesting that the member spent his whole time talking about what this meant to volunteer firefighters and then alluded to full-time firefighters in I thought a bit of an offhand way in his speech, which tends to indicate, I would believe, that the member across the way from Norfolk, along with the rest, probably the majority of the Conservative caucus, is really in support of diminishing the importance of full-time firefighters in this province and diminishing their numbers overall. I say that is not acceptable. We need to have a mix between our volunteer and our professional force. We need to make sure that it works well, and by demeaning full-time firefighters, I don't think you're doing quite well.

The other thing is that the government seems to be sitting in la-la land, because it comes into the House and in every speech tries to make us and the public believe that full-time firefighters and the two full-time firefighter associations are in complete support of what the government is doing. Well, that is not the case. I can't say what's on my mind because it would be unparliamentary, but let me assure you it is not nice, and firefighters in this province do not support what you are doing, sir.

**Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South):** I just wanted to congratulate my friend from the riding of Norfolk for his I think incisive remarks. I am here but to buttress some of the comments and concerns he has raised. In particular I note that my honourable friends opposite have taken it upon themselves to criticize the process by which this bill has been introduced and discussed.

The fact of the matter is that fire services reform has been a topic of conversation between government and the constituent agencies for almost 30 years. It was the Liberal government that established the Fire Services Review Committee, which started the process of meaningful reform, and we have merely started to get beyond all the claptrap and talk and into action to ensure that our communities are safe, or as safe as possible in a modern society, from the threat of fire.

Indeed it's not only myself saying this. I would draw the members' attention to the fact that the minister, Minister Runciman, has taken the opportunity at the end of November to meet with representatives of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association and with representatives of the Provincial Federation of Ontario Fire Fighters. It was a very constructive meeting where a lot of misconceptions, perhaps due to some fearmongering that had occurred, were alleviated. I have a letter from the presidents of those two organizations where they say they are pleased indeed to hear that the province-wide public hearings will occur over the winter with regard to Bill 84 and, that "in response to your request, we will advise you of our choices of locale."

They are part of the process. They have always been part of the process. They are confident that they will be able to have a say in public hearings with regard to this bill and I am confident earnings they can represent their representatives and their firefighters far better than the members opposite can.

**Mr Bradley:** It's a sad state of affairs when all the government can claim is that they're going to go through

the normal process that everybody would expect; in other words, that we're going to go through the idea of having hearings across the province so people can have input.

That's the sad state we've reached today in Ontario, that the government brags about this. In fact, when I've talked to the firefighters, they fully expected that this would be the case, though they asked those of us in opposition to intervene, so I sent a letter to the government House and leader and said, "Would you please ensure what normally we would have: public hearings across the province so the firefighters can have their input?"

To this point in time nobody has listened to them. You've excluded them. The people who are on the front lines, who understand fire safety the most, you have now excluded those people. The firemen and firewomen are very concerned as well because they know that the government is closing hospitals around the province, including the Hotel Dieu in St Catharines and the Port Colborne hospital and the Niagara-on-the-Lake hospital, that the Douglas Memorial Hospital in Fort Erie is being radically changed, and that the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital in the riding of Lincoln is threatened with near closure, a least a radical change to it. All these people are contacting me. The firefighters are worried about this because they know that none of these should be closed, that these are not made-in-Niagara solutions we're talking about. This is a made-in-Toronto solution, not even made at the cabinet table but made by Tom Long and the other ideological advisers to the government. So this bill fits in with the general tenor of closing hospitals in this province and carrying out other kinds of cuts which are hurting people on the front line.

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**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Norfolk, you can sum up.

**Mr Barrett:** Just to perhaps address some of the recent comments from members opposite with respect to rushing this through and with respect to a lack of consultation, I'd like to further the line of argument presented by my colleague the member for Brampton South, and I will mention, as I mentioned earlier, that this legislation goes back almost 50 years, over 50 years. It hasn't been rushed through. There has been a lot of activity, and I would say the members opposite are dead wrong when they say there has been a lack of consultation with respect to these changes.

Consultation has been ongoing for over 30 years. We heard about the Fire Services Review Committee, a committee established by the Liberal government in 1989. This committee included representatives from the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association and representatives from the Provincial Federation of Ontario Fire Fighters. In 1990 and 1991, under the NDP, the committee met, and its report was distributed for comment in 1993. All stakeholders, including fire unions, provided written responses, and we have access to these reports to better produce the kind of legislation we need to protect our communities from fire. I don't know why the Solicitor General of the day did not act on that report. Instead, he chose to institute another round of consultations in 1994.



Dialogue, as we know, is still ongoing. Our Solicitor General has spoken to associations on November 21, has addressed the unions. The message is clear: This government wants your input. We want input from people across Ontario, and public hearings will be held on Bill 84.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I'm pleased to be able to offer a few comments today on this important piece of legislation, Bill 84.

**Mr Bradley:** Certainly until 6 o'clock.

**Mr Michael Brown:** That's quite possible.

One of the things that strikes me, this being January 13, I believe, 1997, is I was reflecting a little bit about what I might have been doing last year at this particular time. I don't think on this exact date, but in this general time frame, we were out having hearings on Bill 26. I remember being out on the hearings on Bill 26, and we might remember in this place why we were out having these hearings on Bill 26. We were out because an opposition stayed, did things that were quite improper, I guess one would say, but managed to force this government into having hearings across this province on Bill 26.

I bring that to your attention because at the hearings in Sudbury, I believe it was, and I'm sure it happened in other locations, one group, the professional firefighters from Sudbury, came before the committee — actually, there was more than one group — and they brought videotape. They brought what the Progressive Conservatives had sent out to them before the election. This was quite slick. It was Mr Harris, then the leader of the third party, saying to them, "Look, we're not going to make any changes to the way firefighting is handled in this province, any changes at all, until we've had a huge consultation and we've talked to everybody." That's what the Premier said. I saw it on videotape. It was quite impressive. You would have believed him if you had seen it. He was very sincere, probably something like this \$800,000 campaign they're presently involved in. The sincerity's just dripping as he makes these promises.

**Mr Bradley:** Where did they get the money? From developers?

**Mr Michael Brown:** The \$800,000? The \$800,000 came from those people in the province with very deep pockets who I suspect are going to be benefiting hugely from the crazy voodoo tax scheme that delivers huge amounts of money to the richest people in this province of Ontario. That's where it's being paid for. But I digress.

Why has this bill been brought to my attention? It was brought to my attention because there were thousands of firefighters out on the lawn in front of this place saying: "Premier Harris told us in this video that he would talk to us. He hasn't. He hasn't talked to us at all. We're out here saying that we want our say on this legislation." The Premier is doing something exactly different than what he said he would do in that very slick video presentation he prepared directly for the professional firefighters in Ontario. It's on videotape. If there's anything that might cause people to wonder about the credibility of politicians, it would be just watching that tape and now seeing the actions we're seeing today.

Out among those thousands of firefighters on the lawn there were people from Elliott Lake. Bruce Walker was out there. He was in to my office after and spoke to me about this very bill. I couldn't find him. There were so many people out there that I couldn't find the third of the Elliott Lake firefighters who took the time to come down from Elliott Lake to be out in front of the Legislature. I couldn't find the third of the firefighters from Elliott Lake who had come down — one third. That is a significant representation of the firefighters in Elliott Lake. I did find some of the fellows from Sudbury who were good enough to share their bus with the Elliott Lake firefighters on their way down to be here. They were expressing their very deep concern that this bill did not represent the views they had communicated to Premier Harris before the election and that Premier Harris was busily ignoring what they were thinking about in terms of legislation.

Having reflected just a little bit upon where we were last year and where we are this year as an opposition, again demanding that we have public hearings on this bill, it's déjà vu all over again, as Yogi Berra would say.

I should speak a little directly to the bill and point out that most of this bill all members can support. This is a bill that is largely supportable. I should go through this bill section by section so that we can indicate that there are many good things and probably relate a bit of the history of this bill so that the people of Ontario can understand that this bill, in large part, has broad support among all three political parties, but it has some sections that are unacceptable to some.

I just point out that this bill was introduced on October 16, and certainly that's what brought our friends the firefighters to the front door.

The main legislation governing the provision of fire services in Ontario has remained essentially the same since 1949. In 1989 the Liberal government created the Fire Services Review Committee, consisting of representatives from the Solicitor General, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs and various professional firefighters associations. Its task was to review the delivery of fire services in Ontario. Following the election of the NDP in 1990, the review was continued but the NDP never did deal directly with the issue. The Fire Services Review Committee report was eventually released reflecting consensus and, where not achievable, the views of the Ministry of the Solicitor General. We are now seeing this legislation before us purporting to be the end result of a long process of consultation.

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The bill is intended to streamline current legislation, create better integration of services, provide more public education to increase fire safety and give municipalities more flexibility to deal with local services.

The bill repeals and consolidates separate acts relating to fire services into one piece of legislation that makes sense. The following legislation will be affected in this manner: the Accidental Fires Act; the Egress from Public Buildings Act; the Fire Accidents Act; the Fire Departments Act; the Firefighters Exemption Act; the Firefight-



ers Protection Act, 1993; the Fire Marshals Act; the Hotel Fire Safety Act; the Lightning Rods Act.

Part I of the bill sets out the definitions of various terms utilized in the legislation.

Part II of the bill deals with municipal responsibility for fire protection services.

Subsection 2(1) requires every municipality to establish, at minimum, a fire safety public education program. They may also provide other fire services such as fire suppression, rescue and emergency services.

Subsection 2(2) of the bill requires each municipality to appoint a fire safety officer or a team or to establish a fire department, depending on their need. Fire safety officers would provide fire protection and fire safety public education programs. Fire departments would provide fire suppression and other fire protection services. The fire marshal would advise municipalities in determining the level and type of services to be provided.

Well, I tell you, that section causes me at least some difficulty because it requires municipalities to do something. They are required by law to do it. I think it's a good thing to provide fire protection and fire suppression, rescue and emergency services, but if you look at a riding or constituency such as the one I represent, it is a large riding where the provision of fire services is often very difficult.

We look at communities across the district of Manitoulin, across the district of Sudbury and in part in the district of Algoma that have some difficulty providing all of these services, and we're not finding that the government of the day is going to match any kind of funding at all to the requirements of what they must do in terms of fire safety or fire protection or emergency services or fire suppression.

You might want to wonder in the township of Shedden how this could be totally affordable if you're working on a model which might be similar to the megacity of Toronto or whatever. I think we would find some difficulty in the local tax base being able to support that kind of service, yet it needs to be provided.

So one would expect that if a level of service is necessary in those municipalities, which I believe it is, that the funding be provided from the province to be able to do it. It only makes sense to me that if the requirement is there, the province is requiring this to be done and this is the minimum level of service that can be provided, and the local tax base, ie, assessment, is not able to support it, the province finds a way that these services are supported.

I say that because we are also in the midst of the chaos created by the amalgamation of municipalities. I know in my constituency and I know across the province that there are discussions going on among various municipalities at this moment deciding what would be the best way to go about merging services, deciding how the various services that they need to provide can best be provided to their taxpayers recognizing geography and democracy and the ability to pay.

There are quite a number of these discussions going on but, I guess as a northern member, one of the more interesting discussions goes on when we start to talk about unorganized municipalities or unorganized townships, something which most members of this House don't have a clue as to what I'm talking about. But there are large areas in my constituency that are unorganized. Often they are adjacent to organized municipalities. There are very few people in most of these unorganized areas, although in some there is a relatively large population. The organized municipalities are very fearful that they will have to take on the responsibility, under these amalgamations, for all the services necessary in the unorganized townships.

Any of us would know that one service that is very expensive to provide and yet extraordinarily necessary in the unorganized areas is the provision of fire services. Often, that is not the protection of a barn or a house or your summer camp; it is the protection of the crown forest, even the protection of private forests.

The question to many of these municipalities is, "How will we be able to afford to provide firefighting services in these unorganized areas?" You say: "Well, not to worry. Usually the MNR looks after that." I want you to know that MNR is a busy bee trying to get out of as much fire protection as it possibly can because it has no budget. The budget of MNR has been totally emasculated. There are not dollars in MNR to fight fires the way they once did.

As a matter of fact, the ministry is now pursuing "partnerships" with the private sector in terms of firefighting. They are looking for municipalities to become involved. They are looking for first nations to become involved. There's probably nothing wrong with that, as long as the partnership is a true partnership and the money, the funds, the training and the equipment come from the province as part of the deal. Well, we know that is highly unlikely to happen.

I want to say to you that volunteer firefighters are going to be not exceptionally happy, nor are their municipalities, to be out protecting the crown's forests, participating in a way that I think will cost their taxpayers huge amounts of money which they cannot afford.

As we go through the bill a little further, it says that two or more municipalities may share a community fire safety officer, team or fire department. Such arrangements would permit fire departments to respond to fires and emergencies regardless of the municipal boundaries. The fire marshal may also enter into agreements to provide fire protection services to areas that do not have municipal organization.

Madam Speaker, I see that you're getting a little antsy and that it is 6 of the clock. I'm barely a third through my presentation, so I will adjourn or whatever we do at this point.

**The Acting Speaker:** It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1759.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO  
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

**Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Lt Col The Hon / L'hon Henry N.R. Jackman CM, KStJ, BA, LLB, LLD**

**Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell**

**Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers**

**Senior Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Journals / Greffier adjoint principal et Greffier des journaux: Alex D. McFedries**

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees / Greffière adjointe et Greffière des comités: Deborah Deller**

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Agostino, Dominic	Hamilton East / -Est	L	
Arnott, Ted	Wellington	PC	
Baird, John R.	Nepean	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre du Travail
Barrett, Toby	Norfolk	PC	
Bartolucci, Rick	Sudbury	L	
Bassett, Isabel	St Andrew-St Patrick	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, deputy government House leader / adjointe parlementaire du ministre des Finances, chef parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Beaubien, Marcel	Lambton	PC	parliamentary assistant (rural affairs) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Affaires rurales) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Bisson, Gilles	Cochrane South / -Sud	ND	deputy New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Boushy, Dave	Sarnia	PC	
Boyd, Marion	London Centre / -Centre	ND	
Bradley, James J.	St Catharines	L	deputy opposition leader, opposition House leader / chef adjoint de l'opposition, chef parlementaire de l'opposition
Brown, Jim	Scarborough West / -Ouest	PC	
Brown, Michael A.	Algoma-Manitoulin	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Caplan, Elinor	Oriole	L	
Carr, Gary	Oakville South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / adjoint parlementaire du solliciteur général et du ministre des Services correctionnels
Carroll, Jack	Chatham-Kent	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Castrilli, Annamarie	Downsview	L	
Chiarelli, Robert	Ottawa West / -Ouest	L	
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre / -Centre	ND	
Chudleigh, Ted	Halton North / -Nord	PC	
Churley, Marilyn	Riverdale	ND	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législativ
Cleary, John C.	Cornwall	L	
Clement, Tony	Brampton South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Premier / adjointe parlementaire du premier ministre
Colle, Mike	Oakwood	L	
Conway, Sean G.	Renfrew North / -Nord	L	
Cooke, David S.	Windsor-Riverside	ND	
Cordiano, Joseph	Lawrence	L	
Crozier, Bruce	Essex South / -Sud	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
<b>Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne</b>	London North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Curling, Alvin	Scarborough North / -Nord	L	deputy opposition House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition



Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Danford, Harry	Hastings-Peterborough	PC	parliamentary assistant (agriculture and food) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire (secteurs Agriculture et Alimentation) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
DeFaria, Carl	Mississauga East / -Est	PC	
Doyle, Ed	Wentworth East / -Est	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Duncan, Dwight	Windsor-Walkerville	L	
<b>Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet</b>	Durham West / -Ouest	PC	Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Elliott, Brenda	Guelph	PC	
<b>Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L.</b>	Parry Sound	PC	Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances
Fisher, Barbara	Bruce	PC	
Flaherty, Jim	Durham Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Ford, Douglas B.	Etobicoke-Humber	PC	
Fox, Gary	Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox-Hastings-Sud	PC	
Froese, Tom	St Catharines-Brock	PC	
Galt, Doug	Northumberland	PC	parliamentary assistant (environment) to the Minister of Environment and Energy / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Environnement) de la ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Gerretsen, John	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	L	chief opposition whip / whip en chef de l'opposition
Gilchrist, Steve	Scarborough East / -Est	PC	parliamentary assistant (municipal affairs – urban) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur urbain) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Grandmaître, Bernard	Ottawa East / -Est	L	
Gravelle, Michael	Port Arthur	L	
Grimmett, Bill	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	PC	parliamentary assistant (tourism) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Tourisme) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Guzzo, Garry J.	Ottawa-Rideau	PC	parliamentary assistant (energy) to the Minister of Environment and Energy / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Énergie) de la ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Hampton, Howard	Rainy River	ND	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie	Oxford	PC	parliamentary assistant (municipal affairs – rural) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur rural) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles</b>	Willowdale	PC	Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
<b>Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D.</b>	Nipissing	PC	Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Hastings, John	Etobicoke-Rexdale	PC	
<b>Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris</b>	Victoria-Haliburton	PC	Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hoy, Pat	Essex-Kent	L	
Hudak, Tim	Niagara South / -Sud	PC	
<b>Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron</b>	Burlington South / -Sud	PC	Minister without Portfolio (Seniors Issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (affaires des personnes âgées)
Johns, Helen	Huron	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health / adjointe parlementaire du ministre de la Santé

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Johnson, Bert	Perth	PC	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Johnson, Hon / L'hon David</b>	Don Mills	PC	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, government House leader / président du Conseil de gestion, ministre de la Santé, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Johnson, Ron	Brantford	PC	
Jordan, W. Leo	Lanark-Renfrew	PC	deputy government whip / whip adjoint du gouvernement
Kells, Morley	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	PC	
Kennedy, Gerard	York South / -Sud	L	
Klees, Frank	York-Mackenzie	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Richesses naturelles
Kormos, Peter	Welland-Thorold	ND	
Kwinter, Monte	Wilson Heights	L	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	L	
Lankin, Frances	Beaches-Woodbine	ND	chief New Democratic Party whip / whip en chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Laughren, Floyd	Nickel Belt	ND	
<b>Leach, Hon / L'hon Al</b>	St George-St David	PC	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Leadston, Gary L.	Kitchener-Wilmot	PC	
Marchese, Rosario	Fort York	ND	
Marland, Margaret	Mississauga South / -Sud	PC	
Martel, Shelley	Sudbury East / -Est	ND	
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste Marie	ND	deputy New Democratic Party whip / whip adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Martiniuk, Gerry	Cambridge	PC	
Maves, Bart	Niagara Falls	PC	
McGuinty, Dalton	Ottawa South / -Sud	L	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
McLean, Allan K.	Simcoe East / -Est	PC	
McLeod, Lyn	Fort William	L	
Miclash, Frank	Kenora	L	
Morin, Gilles E.	Carleton East / -Est	L	Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président de la Chambre et Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Munro, Julia	Durham-York	PC	
Murdoch, Bill	Grey-Owen Sound	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
<b>Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn</b>	Scarborough-Ellesmere	PC	Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Newman, Dan	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for native affairs / adjoint parlementaire du ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
North, Peter	Elgin	Ind	
O'Toole, John R.	Durham East / -Est	PC	
Ouellette, Jerry J.	Oshawa	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Transports
<b>Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al</b>	York Centre / -Centre	PC	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Parker, John L.	York East / -Est	PC	
Patten, Richard	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	L	
Pettit, Trevor	Hamilton Mountain	PC	
Phillips, Gerry	Scarborough-Agincourt	L	
Pouliot, Gilles	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	ND	
Preston, Peter L.	Brant-Haldimand	PC	
Pupatello, Sandra	Windsor-Sandwich	L	
Ramsay, David	Timiskaming	L	



Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Rollins, E.J. Douglas	Quinte	PC	
Ross, Lillian	Hamilton West / -Ouest	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
<b>Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.</b>	Leeds-Grenville	PC	Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels
Ruprecht, Tony	Parkdale	L	
<b>Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob</b>	Mississauga West / -Ouest	PC	Minister without Portfolio (Privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation)
<b>Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William</b>	Eglinton	PC	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Sergio, Mario	Yorkview	L	
Shea, Derwyn	High Park-Swansea	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Sheehan, Frank	Lincoln	PC	
Silipo, Tony	Dovercourt	ND	deputy New Democratic Party leader / chef adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Skarica, Toni	Wentworth North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Smith, Bruce	Middlesex	PC	
<b>Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John</b>	Mississauga North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Education and Training / ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Spina, Joseph	Brampton North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant (small business) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur petites entreprises) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
<b>Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W.</b>	Carleton	PC	Minister of Environment and Energy / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Stewart, R. Gary	Peterborough	PC	
<b>Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris</b>	Etobicoke West / -Ouest	PC	Speaker / Président
Tascona, Joseph N.	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	PC	
Tilson, David	Dufferin-Peel	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General / adjoint parlementaire du procureur général
<b>Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H.</b>	Markham	PC	Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Turnbull, David	York Mills	PC	chief government whip / whip en chef du gouvernement
Vankoughnet, Bill	Frontenac-Addington	PC	
<b>Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble</b>	S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	PC	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones
Wettlaufer, Wayne	Kitchener	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Wildman, Bud	Algoma	ND	New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Wilson, Jim	Simcoe West / -Ouest	PC	
<b>Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth</b>	Waterloo North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Wood, Bob	London South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / adjoint parlementaire du président du Conseil de gestion
Wood, Len	Cochrane North / -Nord	ND	
Young, Terence H.	Halton Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant (colleges and universities) to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire (secteur collèges et universités) du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation

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**Finance and economic affairs /  
Finances et affaires économiques**

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**Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux**

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Clerk / Greffier: Donna Bryce

**Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John Hastings  
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Carl DeFaria, Bill Grimmett, John Hastings, Ron Johnson,  
Frank Miclash, Gilles E. Morin, John R. O'Toole,  
Tony Silipo, R. Gary Stewart, Bud Wildman  
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**Ombudsman**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tom Froese  
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Gerard Kennedy, Shelley Martel, Dalton McGuinty,  
Gilles Pouliot, Toni Skarica  
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Règlements et projets de loi privés**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bruce Smith  
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Tony Martin, John R. O'Toole, Trevor Pettit,  
Sandra Papatello, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Tony Ruprecht,  
Mario Sergio, Derwyn Shea, Frank Sheehan, Bruce Smith  
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**Resources development /  
Développement des ressources**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Barbara Fisher  
John R. Baird, Jack Carroll, David Christopherson,  
Ted Chudleigh, Marilyn Churley, Dwight Duncan,  
Barbara Fisher, Steve Gilchrist, Pat Hoy,  
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Bart Maves, Bill Murdoch,  
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Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

**Social development / Affaires sociales**

Chair / Président: Richard Patten  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John Gerretsen  
David S. Cooke, Tom Froese, John Gerretsen,  
Michael Gravelle, Helen Johns, W. Leo Jordan,  
Gerard Kennedy, Frances Lankin, Julia Munro,  
Richard Patten, Trevor Pettit, Peter L. Preston,  
Lillian Ross, Bruce Smith  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

These lists appear in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month. A list arranged by riding appears when space permits.

Ces listes figurent dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et du premier lundi de chaque mois. Par contre, une liste des circonscriptions paraît si l'espace est disponible.



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## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

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Tuesday 14 January 1997

Mardi 14 janvier 1997



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

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L'honorable Chris Stockwell

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 14 January 1997

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 14 janvier 1997

*The House met at 1332.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### MINISTER OF NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT AND MINES

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** Recently I received a year-end report which the Minister of Northern Development and Mines claims to be proud of. In his year-end review he claims to have realigned the priorities of his ministry to become a better service provider. He did this by slashing his operating budget by 31% — great strategy.

He also claims to have lived up to his commitment of increasing funding for roads, when the first thing his government did was cut the budget for winter maintenance to northern highways — great strategy.

The minister claims to support job-creating initiatives in the north. I wonder, was this before or after they announced that 33% of his staff would be eliminated?

The minister pledged that his ministry would be the policy voice for the north and he did this by asking his policy advisers from Sudbury to commute to Toronto on a weekly basis, at a cost to the taxpayers of northern Ontario and all of Ontario of \$483,431 this past year.

What your year-end report should have highlighted is mega-cuts to job opportunities in the north, mega-cuts to your ministry staff in Sudbury, mega-cuts to transfer payments to cities and towns of northern Ontario, mega-increases in user fees from municipalities because of your mega-cuts and mega-decreases in provincial services to the taxpayers of northern Ontario and mega-downsizing of responsibilities to municipalities that can't afford them.

This week and 1996 have been a —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** We're going to hear today in this Legislature just how badly this government is going to do on behalf of the people of this province when it comes to offloading many of the responsibilities the province presently delivers to its citizens on to the municipalities, something it promised it would not do in the last election, in its Common Sense Revolution.

What is worse is that as this government is moving forward with its agenda of transferring over all of these responsibilities to the municipalities, the ministers of this government refuse to meet with the people who are going to be affected by these particular transfers.

I have but one example with me here today. Last May 17, 1996, the municipality of Iroquois Falls, through the mayor, Mr Ken Graham, and council, asked to meet with the Minister of Transportation with regard to the transferring of provincial highways to municipalities. The municipality made this request in May 1996. When was it finally responded to? Only after a lot of work on the part of myself as the local representative in that community did the minister respond, in December 1996, almost a year later, and what was the response? "No, I can't meet with you. Let's wait until Good Roads in February."

That's not good enough. The citizens of the community of Iroquois Falls, through their council, want to meet with the minister to raise concerns. I guess what is happening here is that the minister is saying: "Listen, I can't handle what's going on here. There's so much happening." The best way to deal with this responsibility is for the minister to duck and not meet with the people of this province and that's not acceptable.

### HAEMODIALYSIS

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth):** I'm quite pleased to announce to the members of the Legislature that kidney patients in Stratford and area will no longer have to travel to London for treatment, thanks to the new dialysis clinic which will soon be established at Stratford General Hospital. As part of the Ministry of Health's \$25-million reinvestment into dialysis services across the province, approximately \$640,000 will be made available to operate a dialysis satellite in Stratford. For people in the Stratford area, this means three days a week will not have to be spent travelling in order to receive treatment they need to live.

I'm excited by this announcement because it shows once again that the Ministry of Health has found an effective way to reinvest savings found in the present health care system. By reducing waste and duplication in the system, we're able to increase funding to the services people in this province really need. The expansion of dialysis services in Perth county is another example of this government's commitment to provide for the care that people need through quality, accessible, community-based services.

I applaud this initiative as a worthy investment and as a program which makes good common sense. It's one more step this government is taking along the road to providing better service at lower cost for the people of Ontario.

### TRUCK SAFETY

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville):** I want to address the issue of flying tires again; I see the



Minister of Transportation here. The minister has tried to defend his role and the role of his government and the action they've taken to date as having some impact on the incidents we've seen; yet again yesterday, more incidents. This government and this minister have not addressed the 31 recommendations in a meaningful way coming out of the Worona inquest.

This government talked about hiring 31 new inspectors. What they forgot to tell you was that the government has announced over 70 new inspectors and that they have deliberately not filled 40 of those positions. The government hasn't told us that they're closing somewhere between 14 and 20 inspection stations throughout this province.

What this government has failed to do is listen to groups such as the CAA, such as CRASH. I urge the minister and our party urges the minister to make this process transparent, to bring out public hearings, to have a legislative inquiry so that we can discuss these issues in a meaningful way and act more quickly than this government has.

We urge the minister to recognize that the government's policy, the government's plan to date, has not been successful. We urge the minister and the government to begin to look at these questions in a public and transparent way where we can address all of them.

We want to work with the government and we want to say, "No more." We know that there are many good truck operators out there. We don't disagree with that. Where we differ with the government is that we say: "Your approach is all wrong. It hasn't worked and you ought to deal with it properly."

#### TAX REDUCTION

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** Today my statement is on tax cuts and the cutbacks. On January 1 the government of Ontario gave a second instalment of a four-stage tax cut. The money necessary for this phoney tax rebate comes from cuts to shelter allowances and other welfare provisions for basic necessities for our fellow citizens who are the most vulnerable people in our society: children, single mothers and people with disabilities. This so-called gift also comes from massive cuts to transfer payments to municipalities.

In Cochrane North, Kapuskasing will receive \$382,000 less this year. In Hearst it's a reduction of \$180,000. Transfer payments for Smooth Rock Falls are reduced by 27%. Most municipalities, particularly the small ones, have already cut everything right down to the bone. I applaud the efforts and the tremendous work of the municipalities to try and cope with these drastic changes, but as we are seeing this week, the government has just started dumping on municipalities and there's worse to come.

To make matters worse, the government, which stands by its "lean and mean" agenda, is spending \$650,000 for ads showing Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Al Leach explaining why they're making dramatic cuts. It's a real insult to the taxpayers of this province. What kind of common sense is that, when you're spending all kinds of money on advertising of this kind?

They destroyed the transportation industry in northern Ontario, they don't put sand or salt on the roads, there's no more airline industry, and it's a disgrace to see them throwing money away on advertising of this kind for Al Leach.

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#### OPERATION RED NOSE

**Mr E.J. Douglas Rollins (Quinte):** I would like to bring to the attention of the members of the House the fine work of the Belleville city community policing program in bringing Operation Red Nose to the city of Belleville.

For 10 days during the holiday season, from 9 pm to 3 am, people who needed a drive home from work or from the bar or from having an extra couple of drinks could phone Operation Red Nose. Teams of three volunteers with one donated car would ensure that both car and driver would arrive home safely. Thanks to the volunteer efforts of 337 people, who worked more than 2,200 hours, 440 clients and their cars were driven home safely from Christmas holiday parties.

I want to thank everyone who contributed to this worthy program, from volunteers who donated themselves, their busy time of the year at Christmastime, to local businesses and radio stations that sponsored the program and the organization efforts of the chairman, Richard Morris, and community police officer David Trought. Not only did Operation Red Nose make holiday travel safer in the Belleville community, but they also raised \$2,000 from their constituents that they gave a ride home to to put back into the program. We thank them for the community efforts they put out.

#### MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** Today 303 Ontarians, employees of the Ministry of the Environment, received layoff notices courtesy of the government of Ontario and our friends across the floor here.

Out of those, 186 were front-line workers. These were the people who inspect, who monitor, who follow up on complaints that Ontarians call into the ministry every single day. Regional offices have been reduced from 22 to 15. The Pembroke and Parry Sound suboffices of the ministry have been closed, thanks to this government; the Gravenhurst district office has been closed, thanks to this government.

In 1995 there were 31,148 complaints to the Ministry of Environment that were followed up on and monitored. Today the ministry has to follow up on roughly the same number with 40% less staff. This government has sent out a very clear message to Ontarians that the environment is not a priority, that the health and safety of people is not a priority.

The second round of cuts no longer simply concerns us as to environmental protection; what this government is doing now is endangering the lives of people across this province, because you abandoned all of the commitments that previous governments in this province have made to the environment.



You should be ashamed of yourselves. You are going to pay a hell of a price for this politically and we're going to pay a hell of a price financially for what you have done to destroy the Ministry of Environment.

#### GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I wish to say today to the government members, as they make their announcements, that all the spin doctoring in the world is not going to hide from the public what the real agenda is. The real agenda, of course, is to find the \$5 billion necessary to pay for their giveaway to their rich friends, who are the ones who are going to benefit the most from the phoney tax scheme.

They're going to do this in a way that's so insidious, because it'll be paid for through services that are cut and through jobs that are lost, and their ultimate goal is to have municipalities and school boards take the political heat, because they don't even have the guts to at least stand up and say: "Yes, we made these cuts. Yes, we threw these people out of work. Yes, it was us who did that." They don't even have the guts to do that. They've got to rearrange the entire structure of the province so that somebody else takes the heat.

There are things they haven't talked about yet we know are still to come. Privatization: The announcements today are going to set up things again so that you can sell off public services to your rich corporate friends so they can make even more money than they are already from the tax cut. And what about the jobs that are already in place? What about successor rights? We have not yet heard a minister stand up and say: "No, don't worry about successor rights. Those are safe. Whatever's left of them is safe." They aren't. We know it's on the chopping block. You've already done it to tens of thousands of public sector workers in OPSEU, and God knows you've now got it in mind for CUPE workers.

#### CITY OF NEPEAN

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** I'm pleased today to rise and to bring some exciting news from the city of Nepean. After 16 straight years of balancing their budget, after 25 years of keeping tax increases well below the rate of inflation, after the last four years with absolutely no tax increases whatsoever, the city of Nepean is now totally, 100% debt-free.

Last week hundreds of citizens gathered for a mortgage-burning ceremony at Nepean city hall. This didn't happen by accident; it happened because the citizens of Nepean insisted on a pay-as-you-go policy. Successive city councils and an impressive city staff have turned the philosophy of fiscal responsibility into reality in my community.

People in Nepean understand the fiscal realities of the 1990s. Our government knows that families are forced to live within their means and that they expect the same values from their city hall. They know that fiscal responsibility is the very cornerstone of good local government.

The city of Nepean provides a great example for other debt-ridden governments in our area and to both the provincial and federal governments.

Imagine if the province of Ontario was debt-free. We'd have more than \$9 billion each and every year less that we wouldn't spend on interest payments. Instead of sending it to the bond traders in New York City, we could be spending it right here in Ontario. We could eliminate the provincial sales tax. We could cut provincial income tax rates even more and create even more jobs than were created in the province of Ontario in the last year. That would be good news indeed.

I'm very pleased to congratulate everyone in the city of Nepean on this milestone.

#### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

##### SOCIAL, COMMUNITY HEALTH AND HOUSING SERVICES

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** I rise today to announce a new plan for social and community health services that will provide higher quality services at less cost to the taxpayer.

The plan starts with a simplified arrangement between the province and the municipalities. The current maze of programs is costly to taxpayers and confuses people in need.

Our plan integrates the delivery of important social, community health and housing programs at the municipal level. This will create a delivery system that is more efficient —

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** That's not integrating; it's downloading and getting rid of them.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. The member for Cochrane South, you're out of order. First of all, heckling is out of order, but if you're not in your chair, you're, I suppose, doubly out of order anyway. I ask that you go back to your seat. I can't hear the statement. There will be chances for responses. Take up the opportunity at that time. Minister.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Our plan integrates the delivery of important social, community health and housing programs at the municipal level. This will create a delivery system that is more efficient and cost-effective. The province will continue its responsibilities for standards.

On behalf of myself and my colleagues the Minister of Health and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, I would like to highlight a number of important decisions respecting the management and financing of social, community health and housing programs.

To enable taxpayers to share in the savings resulting from the government's reduction of welfare benefits to 10% above the average of the other provinces, the introduction of work for welfare and our crackdown on fraud and abuse, the funding of welfare will be shared 50-50 between the province and the municipalities.

We will also establish a municipal social assistance reserve as a prudent safeguard against unforeseen local economic circumstances. Today I am very pleased to announce an initial contribution by the province to this fund of \$700 million.



Child care will be managed at the municipal level and cost-shared 50-50, within comprehensive provincial quality and safety standards to safeguard children. It will be a mandatory program.

Responsibility for the management and funding of social housing will be transferred to the municipalities, enabling them to address the housing needs of their communities, as they have done so well in the past.

The province remains committed to maintaining health care spending at \$17.4 billion.

Municipalities will assume full funding of public health programs, with the province retaining responsibility for those programs with a province-wide reach, such as disease control and immunization.

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Municipalities will assume responsibility for the delivery and financing of land ambulance services, while the province will continue to set standards. The province will continue to be responsible for air ambulances.

We have already taken important steps to improve long-term care in the province. These changes will be maintained because they improve quality and access to services. Building on reforms that have already been made in long-term care, the next step in the plan is the creation of a new provincial long-term-care agency that will coordinate the system within province-wide standards. Municipalities will assume 50% of the funding for these services.

The province will assume responsibility for full funding of children's aid societies as part of our children's welfare and children's services initiative.

The province will assume responsibility for full funding of women's shelters.

I am also announcing today that we will shortly establish a social and community health services implementation team, with members from both levels of government, to advise on the best way to manage the changes we are announcing today.

These are major changes that will benefit every citizen of the province. This new plan for integrated social and community health services will provide more efficient services and more quality services at a price the Ontario taxpayer can afford.

#### POLICE SERVICES

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** On Monday, my colleague the Minister of Education announced that education costs will be removed from the residential portion of the municipal property tax base. Later today I intend to introduce long-awaited amendments to the Police Services Act that will bring similar fairness to the way that Ontario taxpayers pay for their policing.

At this time, 576 municipalities do not pay anything for police services through their property taxes, while their neighbours are paying their fair share. For example, the village of Wheatley in Kent county, with a population of slightly over 1,500, currently pays directly for their policing as well as through their property taxes. The district of Muskoka, with a population of more than 45,000, currently does not.

It is only fair that everyone pays for their policing. Past governments knew this was true. In fact, in 1990 and again in 1994, the Provincial Auditor brought this problem to the attention of the governments of the day, but they failed to act.

With these payments will also come local accountability. Police budgets will now be approved by municipal councils and they will appoint the majority of members to their police services boards. We believe this renewed partnership between the province, local government and the police will benefit all the taxpayers of Ontario. Our proposals will allow community leaders to play a critical role in keeping our communities safe.

It's clear to everyone interested in police oversight that the current system does not work. It is complex, expensive and slow.

These amendments will eliminate waste, duplication and overlap. After much study and consultation, we have designed a new oversight system that will offer an efficient, coordinated approach to civilian review and judgement of police actions. The new oversight system will be fair, objective and accountable to the police and the communities they serve. At the end of the day we will have a modernized, streamlined and simplified oversight system that is more responsive and accountable to the complainant. The system will now have a 30-day initial response time set for public complaints. There will also be a clear and simple appeal process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint.

We intend to merge three of the existing oversight bodies into one: the Ontario Civilian Commission on Police Services. Efficiencies will be realized by ending administrative duplication and overlap, not by compromising civilian authority. The fourth oversight body, the special investigations unit, which deals with matters involving serious injury or death, will continue in its role as an independent and impartial investigator of police conduct under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Attorney General.

With these amendments, every municipality will be treated fairly since they will all contribute directly to the cost of policing. These important changes will also give local governments the authority and tools they need to best provide policing services for their communities.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Ministry statements? Responses?

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** Mr Speaker, we couldn't take any more of those statements on one day, that's for sure.

In all the poetic language of the statement from the Solicitor General, I don't see anywhere that this is a downloading of \$183 million from the provincial government to municipalities right across this province, this coming during a week with billions and billions more dollars being downloaded on our municipalities.

I'm also very disappointed that with the local police service boards there's not going to be that strong provincial presence that we've always had in police service boards across this province. This gave a bit of continuity for police service delivery across this province.

One thing I'd say to the minister is that he did listen to some of our responses when it comes to police over-



sight; it is very important that the special investigations unit, commonly known as the SIU, is separate from the Solicitor General and kept under the Attorney General. But this comes in a week when the municipalities are absolutely reeling under the offloading, and this again will contribute to higher local taxation across Ontario.

### SOCIAL, COMMUNITY HEALTH AND HOUSING SERVICES

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** I've had a very short time to review the minister's announcement, and I just want to ask one question: Where did this come from? Nowhere do I know of any recommendation from any thoughtful source or study that has recommended doing what the minister announced today, or in fact in any advice this government has received from anyone who knows anything about creating systems that work, caring for the vulnerable, ensuring that you have accountability and appropriate responsibility.

I say to this minister that the implications of your announcement today are staggering. You simply do not understand what will occur if you continue down this path. I was recently at a meeting with experts in the health field, for example, where each and every one agreed that it would be impossible to get to an integrated health system if you remove public health and long-term care and download it to the municipal taxpayer. This has been called ludicrous and it has been called stupid, and I have to tell you I'm very worried about the implications.

Further, the impact on the most vulnerable in our society is something we should all be concerned about, because what today's announcement will do is see that we have either higher property taxes or fewer services for the most vulnerable. For children who are already living in poverty in unprecedented numbers in this province, for single women who are attempting to get out of the welfare trap, having those services on the backs of the local property taxpayer will make it impossible to ensure that those services are appropriate to the needs of those most vulnerable.

To the people in our communities who think this is going to mean lower property taxes, I say to you that it will not. It will mean a significant diminishment in the quality of life in our communities, because what's going to happen is that the province is going to call the shots, they're going to mandate the programs, and they're going to force municipalities, local property taxpayers, to pay. That's the result of this policy. Municipal representatives will say to their constituents: "There's nothing I can do. The province made me do it." You are tying the hands of municipalities, and further, you are creating inequities in health and social services across this province. The poorer municipalities will not be able to maintain the service levels and people will be seriously and negatively impacted. The evidence is clear and it is there.

This is not about better service. This is about less money for some of the most important social services that we in Ontario have prided ourselves on being able to provide to those less fortunate. Obviously what you said to your bureaucracy was, "How do we make somebody else pay, so that we can hide our cuts?" You're doing this

to find the dollars for your irresponsible tax scheme and you are forcing those services where there is the greatest need and the greatest growth potential — seniors, child care, long-term care. Shame on you.

1400

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** The citizens of Ontario deserve an explanation of what is really happening here today. The citizens of Ontario will remember Mike Harris, the leader of the Conservative Party, saying, "There will be no new user fees from a Conservative government," saying that if there were any cuts made by a Conservative government, they would not result in new user fees out there, and a Conservative Party saying before the election: "There will be no cuts to health care. There will be no cuts to children."

Let us look at what is happening today. In health care, seniors are essentially being abandoned by this government. Homes for the aged, nursing homes, home care and ambulance services are all being pushed down on to municipalities. What this means is that as our population ages, as there is more need for homes for the aged, as there is more need for home care, as there is more need for these community services, municipalities will either have to ratchet up their property taxes substantially or these services are going to wither and have huge holes in them.

What we're seeing is the dismantling and destruction of our health care system, but this government doesn't have the honesty to come out and say, "We're doing it." Instead, they're going to shove it off on municipalities and make municipalities do the dirty work for them.

Let's talk about child care. Anyone who has looked at the issue of early childhood education says that the more we invest in children at an early age, the more it helps us in terms of having a good education system, in terms of being a productive society, in terms of saving other costs in the justice system and the health care system and in the education system later on. But this government is no longer going to invest in children. This government is going to push the issue of child care down on to municipalities. Once again, municipalities will be faced with either abruptly and substantially increasing the property tax or watching our child care system wither and die from a thousand cracks as well. That's what this government is really doing.

Then there's policing, from a Solicitor General who claims to speak for policing. I remember the Conservative Party saying, "There will be no cuts to policing." I remember the Conservative Party saying, "There will be no new user fees as a result of government cuts." But what's happening here today is that literally hundreds of millions of dollars of policing costs are being forced down on municipalities, and once again municipalities will either have to ratchet up their property taxes or have to start charging user fees to provide one of the most basic and essential services in an organized, civilized society — policing.

As I said, I don't remember people voting to see health care dismantled, I don't remember people voting to see homes for the aged starved for funding, I don't remember hearing of people voting for policing to be forced down on to municipalities. Imagine what's going to happen in



the future: People see that the service is falling in their home for the aged, so they call up the Conservative government. The Conservative government says: "Oh no, homes for the aged aren't our responsibility any more. What happens to seniors isn't our responsibility. Go talk to your municipality." Imagine when policing becomes inadequate and people call up the Solicitor General and the Solicitor General says: "Well, that's not my responsibility any more. Go talk to the municipality."

This is the extraction from health care, the extraction from child care, the extraction from policing, the extraction from communities of billions of dollars in order that this Conservative government can give its wealthy corporate friends on Bay Street their \$200,000 and \$300,000 gifts via their tax scheme. That's what's happening. Billions of dollars will come out of home care, homes for the aged and ambulance services in order that that tax break can be provided for the wealthiest. Hundreds of millions of dollars will come out of policing in order that the tax scheme can be paid for. Millions of dollars will come out of child care in order that the tax scheme can be paid for.

As I said, this is about health care cuts, child care cuts, policing cuts, community cuts in order that this government —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

#### GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: This is a very serious question and I would hope you would bear with me so that I can explain the basis on which I raise this question of privilege.

It's in regard to the text of a government advertisement which was released January 13, 1997, in which the Premier of the province appears and talks about services and local government. He says: "That's why we're making government smaller, simpler and less expensive. The savings won't come from reduced services. They'll come from untangling the bureaucracy, making the system work again." Again, "That's why we're making government smaller," and so on. Then the narrator ends off the advertisement, the commercial, with a message from the government of Ontario.

Speaker, I raise this matter in a very serious vein because I think it pertains to rulings that have been made previously in this House and to rulings that have been made in the federal House of Commons.

I remind you of a headline that appeared in the *Globe and Mail* of Wednesday, October 11, 1989. The headline says, "Fraser Rebukes Tories Over GST Ads — Speaker Demands Respect for Tradition." That news story resulted from a debate which occurred in the House of Commons on Monday, September 25, 1989. Questions of privilege were raised by the then Leader of the Opposition and the then leader of the third party.

The Leader of the Opposition, the Right Honourable John Napier Turner, rose on a question of privilege related to ads that the government had put out on the GST prior to the passage of the legislation as if the legislation had indeed been passed, a somewhat similar

situation, I submit, to the current situation in this Legislature: an ad that has been put out by the government, paid for by the taxpayers, which talks as if legislation dealing with government restructuring and the changes in services and who is responsible for what had indeed been passed.

I would refer you to some of the comments made in that debate in the House of Commons. Mr Turner said: "I submit to Your Honour that the advertisement not only misrepresents the substance of the text but the procedure to which it is subject under parliamentary rules. It prejudices the proceedings that are now before the committee of the House, the standing committee on finance, as well as prejudicing future proceedings and decisions of the House itself."

He goes on later to say — and these are comments from the *Hansard* of September 25, 1989; this is in translation — "These advertisements violate our parliamentary tradition in two more ways. They prejudice the proceedings that are now before the standing committee on finance as well as prejudicing future proceedings of the House itself. Mr Speaker, these ads constitute a breach of the rights and privileges of all members and a contempt of Parliament."

Further on, Mr Turner says: "I point out to you, Mr Speaker, the definition of 'contempt' contained in the 20th edition of *Ersine May's Parliament Practice*, chapter 10, page 143: 'It may be stated generally that any act or omission which obstructs or impedes either House of Parliament in the performance of its functions, or which obstructs or impedes any member or officer of such House in the discharge of his duty, or which has a tendency, directly or indirectly, to produce such results may be treated as a contempt even though there is no precedent of the offence.'"

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Further, the leader of the then third party, Mr Broadbent, intervened in the debate and made some comment: "If all of these changes that the government asserts in its advertising are going to take place with the considerable detail outlined in the advertisements put in the papers, what, we ask, is the relevance of the hearings?" — that is the hearings of the committee.

Further he says: "There surely is a contempt of Parliament by proceeding with these ads before Parliament has agreed. Beyond that there is a contempt for the people of Canada if they say they are going to have hearings across the country and not pay the slightest attention to what the people of Canada have to say."

With respect to this, I point out that on a number of occasions in this House ministers have said the government is going to have hearings, committee hearings, on the various pieces of legislation that are coming down in this session. Surely if those hearings are to have any meaning, they cannot then be advertising as if these pieces of legislation indeed have been already passed.

I refer again to Mr Broadbent's comments: "I can express my own opinion that the content was obviously drafted in a cavalier manner. There is an element of confidence, if not of boldness, in the use of the phrase as a definition as 'save this ad.'"

The next quote is a quote from the Honourable Speaker Fraser. Mr Speaker Fraser said: "I want this



House to understand very clearly that if your Speaker ever has to consider a situation like this again the Chair will not be as generous. This is a case which, in my opinion, should never recur. I expect the Department of Finance and other departments to study this ruling carefully and to remind everyone within the public service that we are a parliamentary democracy, not a so-called executive democracy nor a so-called administrative democracy."

Further he rules: "This advertisement may not be a contempt of the House in the narrow confines of a procedural definition, but it is, in my opinion, ill conceived and it does a great disservice to the great traditions of this place. If we do not preserve these great traditions, our freedoms are at peril and our conventions become a mockery. I insist, and I believe that I am supported by the majority of moderate and responsible members on both sides of the House, that this ad is objectionable and should never be repeated."

Those are very strong words from the Speaker of the House of Commons on September 25, 1989.

I'd like also to refer to a ruling that was made on Monday, March 28, 1994, by the Honourable Speaker Warner when a similar question had been raised in this House by the late former member for Nepean, Mr Daigeler, on March 21, 1994. In his ruling Mr Speaker Warner said: "On Monday of last week, the member for Nepean (Mr Daigeler) rose in the House on a question of privilege concerning an advertisement that had appeared in certain newspapers in the Ottawa-Carleton area" — these advertisements were about Bill 77, which was before the House at that time at first reading — "...remarks which can be interpreted as suggesting that the bill would become law by a specified time even though the bill had only received first reading." I submit, a situation very similar to the one we find ourselves in today.

Mr Warner goes on further to say that he had reviewed the ad that appeared on February 8, 1994, in the issue of the *Ottawa Citizen* in light of the parliamentary authorities. He then refers to Speaker Fraser and says, "In the course of ruling that there was no case for breach of privilege or for contempt, Speaker Fraser of the House of Commons found that the advertisements" that were referred to in the federal House "were essentially informational in nature and that there was no intention to infringe the privileges of the House."

Then he says finally: "In view of these rulings, and after careful consideration of the present circumstances, I find that a *prima facie* case has not been made out.

"However, I want to say to the minister that this action has come very close to contempt, and in the future the minister should exercise more caution and exhibit greater respect for the proprieties of this House."

I thank the member for Nepean for bringing this matter to my attention.

Here we have two situations where a government, one at the federal level and the other in Ontario, had issued advertisements about legislation that was before the House and about which there had not yet been public hearings but which had public hearings promised. Surely the purpose of public hearings is to hear the views of the

public and to amend or withdraw legislation based on the presentations made by the public. If that is not the purpose of public hearings, then they have no purpose.

For that reason, I ask you, Speaker, to review this advertisement, to review the rulings of Mr Speaker Fraser and Mr Speaker Warner, to admonish the government to withdraw this ad and to ensure that this kind of thing never happens again.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** If you want to rule on that, I have one that's very similar but not exactly on that. I don't know whether you want to comment on that first or hear mine first.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I think I'll comment on the one the member for Algoma brought up. Any other points? No. Then I will do as the member for Algoma requested: I'll take that under advisement, reserve and report back at the earliest possible convenience.

The member for St Catharines.

**Mr Bradley:** Mine will be somewhat shorter but it deals with a similar subject that all members worry about, depending I guess on what side of the House they sit on more often than not, and that is the whole issue of government advertising and how you, as the chair of the Board of Internal Economy, deal with this.

The reason I say this is that whether you're sitting in the opposition or the government, the government has almost unlimited resources to advertise its position. We all have the ability to speak through the news media or directly to the public through this House, which I think is very commendable, but governments have far more latitude to spend money to place their position before the public of the province. The opposition does not have the same resources to be able to do so. We as members have rules we must follow which confine us to providing information; not self-serving, partisan information, though I know some people interpret it from time to time to be that way. I don't want to pretend it's not.

My concern is that the government is now spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on what I consider to be self-serving, partisan advertising — perhaps the government doesn't consider it to be that way; I respect that — while the opposition is confined to not doing so by the rulings of the Board of Internal Economy.

If the government were using the resources of the Conservative caucus bureau, that may be a different interpretation, but what I'm asking you is whether you believe you have any jurisdiction at all — because you may not; I understand that — to restrict the government from self-serving, partisan advertising of the kind I believe is going on at this time.

**The Speaker:** It's a very interesting point of privilege the member for Algoma brings forward and also the member for St Catharines.

Speaking at this point in time, I'm not certain of the amount of jurisdiction I have with respect to expenditures by the government that would be classified as advertising etc. It is certainly something I would like to investigate, take under advisement, and I'd be very prepared to report back, on not only the member for Algoma's privilege but also the member for St Catharines's.

If that's it, then we can move to question period.



1420

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### SOCIAL, COMMUNITY HEALTH AND HOUSING SERVICES

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services, whose announcement today I can sum up in five simple words: more property taxes, less compassion.

Today the province of Ontario announced it will completely abandon its responsibility for health promotion, food safety, water quality control and ambulances. You've abandoned fully one half of your role in caring for our seniors, and by doing so you have said that long-term health care for seniors is no longer a priority. On top of all this, you're dumping one half of the cost of welfare on to the municipal property taxpayer.

As a result, not only will the levels of service be unequal in every town and city in Ontario, but huge extra costs will be added directly to the municipal property tax bill of every homeowner in the province. Is your income tax cut really worth not only higher property taxes but also abandoning your responsibility for the needy?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** We are doing no such thing. There is no abandoning of the social programs in this province. One of the strengths of the social programs in this province has been the municipal component of those programs. Municipalities have been delivering. They've been delivering well, they do it extremely well, and what these changes do is build on that expertise. This is about better services in a less tangled, less confusing way, in a way that taxpayers will be able to afford. That's what these changes are all about.

**Mr McGuinty:** The smoke is billowing, but we can see through it. You know, Mike Harris was very fond of saying that there's only one taxpayer. I can tell you that taxpayer is in for a big surprise when the Mike Harris portion of the property tax bill is going to arrive. They can kiss their income tax cut goodbye. The Common Sense Revolution promised that property taxes would not increase. Your announcement today ensures that they will. By exposing local property taxpayers to the volatility of welfare costs and giving them responsibility for the increasing costs of caring for our seniors, you have guaranteed increases in property taxes right across the province. Will you not admit that all you did today was create another smokescreen of chaos to hide the real cost of your tax cut, which is a property tax increase?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** With all due respect, the only person who is having difficulty seeing through the smoke is the member of the opposition across the way. We have taken a service — education — where school board expenses were growing at 80% in the last 10 years, we have taken that program off the backs of the property taxpayers. What they have been replaced with are programs where there is cost-sharing and an ability to manage. Frankly, we have given them a share in the social service system, which is a system where costs have been decreasing.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Minister.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Mr Speaker, I'd just like to finish the point by saying I have some difficulty with the opposition's distrust of municipalities and their ability to exercise these responsibilities. They have proved they can do it. I don't know why they would question them.

**Mr McGuinty:** This has nothing whatsoever to do with our distrust of municipalities in Ontario; it has everything to do with our distrust of this government's intentions.

Minister, by dumping the costs of long-term health care for seniors and the costs of child care and the costs of social assistance on to the property tax bill, you are abdicating your rightful responsibility to ensure that these needs are met in Ontario. By saying that these are no longer provincial priorities, you've destroyed the province's ability to ensure that we are a compassionate society.

There's another aspect of your actions that we shouldn't overlook. What you've done today will serve to further divide this province. What you've done is pit property taxpayers against seniors in need, against our poor and against our children using child care. Minister, is that your vision of Ontario, a province where neighbours begrudge neighbours because they're old and sick or because they're poor or because they're young and in need of child care?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I don't know which voters the honourable member speaks to, but those I have spoken to have taken great pains to tell me that they are quite prepared to pay taxes to provide the social services they value in this province. What this change today recognizes is that the municipal level of government is very much a part of the social service system.

As a matter of fact, I'd like to offer a quote. For example, Shirley Hoy, the administrator of social services at Metro, soon to become Toronto, says she's been saying all along that municipalities should administer welfare and pay half the costs for this. Now she is saying that it wouldn't be so bad if municipalities had to contribute more, not less, to welfare support. She says, "If Queen's Park takes over welfare completely, along with children's services and hostels, we will lose control of the quality of life in this city." Regions, municipalities, are very much a part of that delivery of service.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr McGuinty:** My second question is for the same minister. Today, Ontarians' already fragile confidence in our health care system was dealt another major blow. Today, you announced that you're shirking your responsibility for providing equal and accessible health care to all Ontarians. You've dumped over \$1.8 billion in costs for long-term care for seniors, public health and ambulance services on to our municipalities. In so doing, you are placing Ontarians' equal access to health care in jeopardy. What this means is that the quality of care Ontarians receive from the municipalities will now depend on the wealth of the community they live in.

Minister, tell me, why have you thrown equal access to health care, especially for our seniors, out the window?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** One of the success stories of this government, and I can understand why the opposition



may not wish to acknowledge it, has been long-term-care reform, where we want to ensure that those services are there for the seniors when they need them.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, I heard that comment. I have to ask you to withdraw. I think it's best that you not ask me which one I heard.

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I withdraw.

**The Speaker:** Supplementary?

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, let's be honest. You are shamelessly abandoning your responsibility to our frail and sick elderly. Surely you and all your colleagues over there would agree that our provincial government, your government, has a special responsibility to protect our most vulnerable citizens. Nowhere in your Common Sense Revolution did you threaten to transfer responsibility for our sick elderly to municipalities.

**1430**  
Let me tell you what people are saying. Your own Who Does What panel and Duncan Sinclair, head of your restructuring commission, unanimously opposed dumping health care on to communities. In fact, Mr Sinclair said it's just stupid. Minister, why have you chosen to wash your hands of your responsibility for our sick seniors?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Dumping health services on the municipalities of course is dumb. That's not what we're doing here. We are providing —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I think this is going to be the first four-question question period we've ever had. We have to get through these questions.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I have difficulty understanding why the members of the opposition would think that when the municipalities have been given the financial freedom that they now have, have been given the flexibility that they now have, they would not wish to exercise the skill and the care they have to date in providing these services.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** All right. Minister?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The honourable Leader of the Opposition may wish to dismiss the expertise of someone as qualified as Shirley Hoy, but perhaps I could quote someone else, from Halton region: "County and regional governments have a long and successful history in the funding, management and delivery of long-term-care services."

I agree with the regions. I agree with the municipalities. They have expertise, they have commitment, and now they have the ability to help share in that responsibility.

**Mr McGuinty:** The minister is fond of selectively quoting, so I'm going to remind her of something I remember hearing. Just prior to the last election, her party said that aid for seniors would not be cut.

I ask you, how can you stand in your place today and claim that you've kept that very crucial promise? Not only is your government closing hospitals, sending countless sick and elderly patients back into communities to fend for themselves, but today you're backing down from your responsibility — it's not the responsibility of

municipalities but your responsibility — to guarantee quality, accessible health care for our seniors, no matter where they live in Ontario.

Minister, will you not admit here and now that when you cut through the smokescreen of today's announcement, what you've really done is to have broken a key election promise that you, your government — not municipalities — will maintain aid for our seniors?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** We are maintaining aid for our seniors. The only change happening in the health care envelope, as the Minister of Health has said so often in this House, is the restructuring in those services that has been so desperately needed. Even the member's own former health critic was quoted on the front page of the Toronto Star about the desperate need for restructuring in health care. That's what's happening in health care.

I think the municipalities are quite able and quite prepared —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Minister?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Long-term care has been an important initiative in this province. It is not being jeopardized. Long-term-care reform will continue to roll out as it is supposed to roll out, the changes. The only difference is that the funding will be shared with the municipalities, which are part of our social and health services network in this province, and the long-term-care agency that the ministry is putting in place ensures that the municipalities, ensures that the province, ensures that the consumers and providers will have a say in that very important system.

**The Speaker:** New question. Leader of the third party.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is also for the Minister of Community and Social Services. David Crombie, who did so much of the Who Does What, recommended in his report against the costs of social assistance being pushed on to municipalities. Mr Crombie made the case. He said that municipalities only have user fees or the municipal property tax, and in tough economic times, when people are laid off from their jobs, municipalities simply won't have the financial assets, through the municipal property tax, to help people in terms of social assistance. He said that municipalities would be forced into substantial tax increases if social assistance is pushed on to municipalities. I believe that at the press conference he alluded to the fact that during the Great Depression municipalities went bankrupt because they couldn't deal with social assistance. Can you guarantee municipalities across this province that they won't have to raise their municipal property taxes —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Minister.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I appreciate that Mr Crombie and his panel did a lot of hard work. They tried to balance a lot of different objectives. Unfortunately, some of the recommendations that they made to this government were not going to allow us to achieve the objective we need to achieve, and that's better quality services at a lower cost to taxpayers. They wanted us to assume education and welfare and children's welfare, and the list went on and on, and there was no attempt to do the balance that I think is appropriate in the social services area. The Crombie panel also said the municipalities could opt out



of welfare, and I am sure that the member opposite is not advocating that we should have adopted that particular recommendation.

Of course municipalities, when there are unforeseen local circumstances, when there may well be economic changes, need the support. That is why the social assistance reserve fund has been put in place, to do that. I would like to remind the members that we have taken off the property tax system a program that was growing at 80% over the last 10 years, and one of the programs that they have is a program that has been reduced —

**The Speaker:** Minister, thank you very much. Supplementary.

**Mr Hampton:** You're right. Mr Crombie's recommendation would not allow the government to achieve its major objective. It would not allow the government to extract hundreds of millions of dollars from social assistance and health care to give your wealthy friends on Bay Street a big tax cut. That is what is really bothering municipalities. They see you giving the president and the chief executive officer of the Bank of Montreal a \$200,000 tax gift while they face an ugly choice: either they raise property taxes substantially to pay for social assistance, homes for the aged, home care, ambulances, police, or they see these very important health care services and community services dissipate and crack.

That's their fear. You're going to give a big tax break to your wealthy friends. I ask you again: Can you guarantee to municipalities that they won't have to substantially raise their property taxes in order to cover health care, policing —

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I can't speak for the municipal representatives in the member's riding, but I can certainly speak about the municipal representatives in my own riding, who have been incredibly responsible in how they have treated the services for people. What we are doing for the municipalities is lifting \$5.4 billion off the property tax system. We are continuing to cost-share the social and community health services that are out there that are so important.

We have \$1 billion worth of community investment fund that was announced yesterday, which is there to support municipalities. I've announced today an additional \$700 million to support municipalities. I don't think responsible municipalities are going to have any difficulty meeting the crucial test, the needs of their taxpayers.

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**The Speaker:** Final supplementary.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** In addition to imposing the cost of social assistance on property taxpayers in every municipality in this province, you have imposed the ownership and responsibility for operations and financing of social housing on municipalities: non-profit housing, public housing, cooperative housing.

You haven't announced any reserve fund for municipalities that are ill-equipped and financially incapable of accepting that responsibility. Guarantee us today that you will prohibit any municipality from shutting down a single unit anywhere in the province of Ontario that's currently in the public domain. Otherwise, you are doing

nothing but selling off the public housing that taxpayers in this province have invested in for decades and generations and that the poor and low-income and families need to live in — decent, affordable housing.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Again, I have seen no reason in my time in elected life to doubt the credibility and the responsibility of municipalities. I don't know why the opposition member across the way would like me to start now. I think it's important to recognize that the property taxpayer has been contributing, has been part of our social and community health network. That has not changed.

I would also like to remind the honourable member that we are providing more financial support to municipalities than the social assistance reserve I announced today. We have, in addition, another \$1-billion community investment fund.

We have also improved the financial strength of the municipalities by taking education, a service that has been growing at 80%, I would like to remind the members, over the last 10 years. I think given that growth, taking it off the property tax has strengthened their position immensely.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** Again, because the Premier is not here and the Minister of Health is not here, I will go back to the Minister of Community and Social Services.

What was really bothering municipalities is this: They know that as our population ages — and they know that the baby-boomers are getting into the senior citizen years — the cost of operating homes for the aged is going to rise. They know that home care costs are going to rise. They know that the cost of providing seniors' housing is going to rise. They know that the cost of ambulance services is going to rise. And they know that if all they have to finance this with is the property tax, they are placed in an unholy situation. Either they have to substantially raise the property tax in order to do the right thing for people who need health care or for our seniors, or they have to cut health care.

Can you give those municipalities that are so concerned about this a guarantee that they will not have to cut health care? Can you give them as well a guarantee that they will not have to raise property taxes in order to —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Minister.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** With all due respect, the member opposite is expressing concern that somehow or other these services are going to spiral out of control and the municipalities will have no ability to fund them. I would like to ask the honourable member, where was he when property taxes were going up at 120% in the last decade? Where was he then?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Government members, please come to order.

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** What a stupid answer.

**The Speaker:** And the member for Oriole.

**Mr Hampton:** I asked for an answer. I asked for an answer ensuring that these important health care services for our communities would continue, that seniors would



continue to receive these services and that municipalities wouldn't have to substantially raise their taxes. What I got was a lot of noise from the minister, so let me try again.

The Dominion Bond Rating Service says that you have to find close to \$6 billion a year to finance your tax scheme for the wealthy. We know, and we've always known, that you're going to have to take money out of health care, out of education, out of communities to finance that. What's really bothering municipalities is that now you're going to push the dirty work off on them, that you don't have the courage to do it yourself. You're going to force them to lay off nurses, you're going to force them to close home care beds, you're going to force them to close down seniors' apartments. That's what's really bothering them.

What assurances can you give seniors, can you give people in need of health care, can you give municipalities that they won't have to do your dirty work to finance your tax giveaway to the wealthy?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The honourable member did not seem to be concerned when municipalities were looking at property tax increases over the last decade of 120% on education costs. What we have done with the changes we are announcing this week is to improve the financial situation of the municipalities. They are quite capable of handling the responsibilities. They have proved it in the past, and we are certainly confident that they will continue to be responsible in managing these things in the future.

**Mr Hampton:** I've tried again, and the minister wants to ignore the question. Let me give you another picture of what municipalities are worried about. You walked into Thunder Bay and you're going to close three hospitals there and two hospitals in Sudbury; about 15 hospitals across Toronto are on the target. We know that as you close those hospitals, the pressure on home care, the pressure on community public health services and the pressure on ambulances is going to go up dramatically. Municipalities are going to get hit with a double whammy; they're also going to have to pick up those costs.

What assurances can you give municipalities across this province that they are going to be able to pay for this increased need for home care, increased need for ambulances and increased need for public health services as a result of your closing of hospitals? What assurance are you going to give them that they won't have to raise property taxes substantially to meet these new costs as a result of your closing of hospitals across this province?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The Minister of Health has been very clear that we have put forward millions of dollars to help in the reinvestments, in the health restructuring so desperately needed in this province. He has talked about cardiac care. He has talked about — for example, in my own riding there is a dialysis clinic. He has talked about reinvestments in community and long-term care. We are prepared to put forward the financial supports for the systems, for the need. We have demonstrated that in the past. We will continue to demonstrate that in the future.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** It is indeed instructive to listen to the minister opposite. This is a question for the minister of — I refrain from calling her the minister of destruction — the Minister of Community and Social Services, in reference to the statement today.

You talk about restructuring; it's really destruction. You talk about respect for municipalities, the same government that's imposed trustees on municipalities. When you talk about health, about the very basics of what sick people in this province have to look forward to from your government, we can only turn to Duncan Sinclair, the head of what was supposed to be the restructuring commission, and what he said about your plan today. He said it is stupid. He also said it messes up the whole task of restructuring health care. Your main responsibility in terms of providing for vulnerable people is completely messed up by what's happening today, and so is your responsibility for the poor and the vulnerable.

Minister, it's important that you answer the question. When your experts, Duncan Sinclair and the Crombie commission, say no, are you going to make these services mandatory so that sick people who depend on long-term care, on public health in this province, will receive these services —

**The Speaker:** Thank you very much. Minister?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** We have certainly talked about the need. I've been very clear in my statement and we have been very clear in what we've talked about to date in what's happening with the Who Does What exercise that province-wide standards are an extremely important component of this picture. The residents of Ontario have high expectations of their social services and their health system. That's why we are making the changes that we are making, to ensure that those programs will be there for them. Province-wide quality standards in all the things I have talked about today are extremely important and we are certainly going to be living up to our responsibility on that.

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**Mr Kennedy:** This is completely unconvincing, coming from the same minister who, when given the option, hammered poor people by cutting them 20%. There are a couple of surprises that the municipalities need to know about today. One of those surprises is how from \$400 million to \$2.3 billion has been the growth in long-term care in the past 10 years, and that's what you're sending to municipalities, a share in that growing need, and abdicating your responsibility in looking after it.

Further, Minister, would you please comment on your new agency for delivering long-term care and how it's going to be pooling taxes from across the province, transferring taxes from one area to another. If it's not, then you'll have a patchwork of services everywhere across the province. It's what we hear from your ministry that you're up to.

Stand up here and talk to the municipalities about the surprises you have in mind for them, their growth in long-term care, the other services you've given them that are growing wildly because of the needs of the demographics in the population and how you're going to make them pay for them.



**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The honourable member across the way was talking about what's been happening in welfare, and I'm certainly quite prepared to outline yet again, and I'm sure he doesn't want to listen to it again, the successes we've had in the welfare system with our welfare reforms: The rate we pay welfare assistance, 10% above the average of the other nine provinces, was part of our campaign commitment; we've moved strongly on abuse and fraud in the system; and we've also implemented and are continuing to see the success of workfare across the province. All that has caused a decrease in the cost of that particular social program they seem to be so concerned about.

I would be quite happy to follow through on the other member's question about the long-term-care agency, but I'm not quite sure what he's referencing when he talks about allocating taxes. They will be doing no such thing. The long-term-care agency is there to ensure that the province and the municipalities have their say, as they should on this important system, and to ensure that the money is allocated appropriately according to need.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** My question is to the same minister and it's with respect to her announcement today on the funding of child care. Your announcement today that you are going to move what was an 80% provincial, 20% municipal cost-sharing to a 50-50 sharing led us to believe that you were talking about the subsidies. But in the culture ministry, I was quite shocked to find out that what is currently paid 100% by the provincial government — wage subsidies, child care resource centres, special needs resources — is also being moved to 50-50. This is a huge new cost to municipalities.

In the transfer cuts you've already made and in the cancellation of the 100% Jobs Ontario child care spaces we've already lost 9,000 child care spaces in this province, Minister. We cannot have the comprehensive system you talk about unless you are today prepared to assure us that you will make provision of child care services mandatory in every community so that families in every community have access to early childhood education. Will you assure us of that today?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** This government did not cancel Jobs Ontario spaces, this government has not cut 9,000 child care spaces and this government said today, and perhaps she missed it, that child care is a mandatory service in Ontario.

**Ms Lankin:** No, I didn't miss it, Minister. What you said today is that there will be provincial standards that are mandatory. That is not the same as mandatory provision of the service. I said to you clearly that 9,000 spaces have been cut by municipalities as a result of your cuts in transfers to funding to municipalities and your abandonment of the 100% fully funded child care spaces under Jobs Ontario, pushing that back to an 80-20 cost-share, now to be pushed back to 50-50.

Minister, if we do not have an assurance that this service is mandatory, that those spaces must be provided, that access must be guaranteed in communities, families are going to be without this resource, families that will

not be able to pursue education and will not be able to pursue work opportunities. Kids are going to be abandoned to community solutions, to individual solutions, and we've seen time and time again the abuse that takes place. If you don't invest early in children we will all pay for it down the road. Your red Tory heart must keep you up at night if you've got any of it left.

Minister, assure us that you will make the provision of these services mandatory. Without that, it spells the complete destruction of this —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Minister.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The honourable member has, many times in this House, demonstrated her commitment, her sincerity, her belief in the importance of child care in this province. I agree. She makes the case for why child care must be mandatory, and it will be mandatory in the new world under the Who Does What recommendations we are announcing this week.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** My question is also for the Minister of Community and Social Services. I know you are aware of my long-time concern for families whose children with developmental disabilities live with them at home. For years these families have seen government money pour into expensive administrative infrastructures rather than direct support programs in the community which help them care for their children at home, especially now that the parents in some of these families are aging and the problem is compounded. Last week we heard in the media that you now have good news in this regard. I wondered if you would like to share with us some of those details.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** I have great respect for the personal and financial sacrifices that those parents who are caring for disabled children at home have to make to do that and I have met many of them. We've talked about it in this Legislature when members of the opposition have brought their cases to the fore. That's why I was especially pleased last week to announce that we have \$15 million in additional supports to improve the services for those families, because they need that help. As we continue with the transfer of care from institutions in the community and social services area to community-based care agencies, where it is working very well, we want to continue to reinvest those resources in that care.

I would like to say that one of the programs that did benefit from this announcement last week, one I know the former leader of the Liberal Party is very interested in, is special services at home, which will indeed get additional money because of this new announcement.

**Mrs Marland:** I realize that my request was only one among many, but I want to publicly express my gratitude that you have responded to my request for additional funding for these families with persons with developmental disabilities. I would ask you if you can explain how the additional money is being allocated.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I'll be very pleased to. I would like to thank the honourable member, as I would some of the



other members here who have helped push so hard to make this announcement possible last week, and I very much appreciate her support on this.

Of this money, \$6 million is going to be used for elderly parents who are caring for their adult children with developmental disabilities at home; \$5 million is going to special services at home, which will expand the number of families who need respite care, child care and at-home follow-up therapy; \$4 million is going to the infant development program, which is an early intervention program for vulnerable young children. That's a program that has not seen new money for many years.

I would also like to point out that for the first time in the Ministry of Community and Social Services we have attempted to allocate this money on an equity basis, so that we are trying to build into the formula those regions — for example, Durham, Halton, York and Peel — that so desperately have growth needs. In Durham region it's been a 19% increase, for example, in terms of the funding for these programs.

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### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** In the absence of the Minister of Health and the Premier, my question is to the Deputy Premier. Shortly before Christmas your hospital restructuring commission came to my city of Pembroke and ordered the closure of the century-old Pembroke Civic Hospital. If that recommendation is accepted by the government, it will mean that later this year the city of Pembroke and area, the largest urban community in that part of eastern Ontario, will have only one hospital, which is owned and operated by the Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

The preliminary report on hospital restructuring in Pembroke makes no provision for any change in the governance of the remaining hospital that is to be in Pembroke after the government decides what to do with the preliminary report.

What is the Ontario government's current position with respect to the governance of hospitals in communities where prior to restructuring there was more than one hospital, but after restructuring there may be only one hospital?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** Indeed, that is a very good question. The member is quite correct: The hospital restructuring commission did make its recommendation and report known on December 4. They gave an extended period of time because of the Christmas break to January 17, I believe, which will be this Friday. I would urge him and other people to respond.

But to speak very directly to the question he asked, in the recommendations, I'm sure he will be aware, on page 51 it says that based on its assessment of the consequences of each of the options, the Health Services Restructuring Commission decided that "a single governance solution based on existing ownership is preferred. However, the Pembroke General Hospital must develop a plan to ensure that representation on the board of governors represents the cultural, linguistic, religious and

socioeconomic makeup of the community that the restructured hospital will serve."

**Mr Conway:** Your commission has come to my town and told the Pembroke Civic Hospital that effective the end of 1997, they are out of business. One hundred years of hospital and community service gone, and there is absolutely no provision in this preliminary report to make any accommodation for the enormous contribution that the Civic Hospital and its people have made to the health care and hospital services of our part of eastern Ontario.

There are scores of people in the public galleries today who want me to ask you, as I now will: Are you and your colleagues in government prepared to compel that there will be a new hospital governance in Pembroke and any similar community that will insist, as a minimum, on fair and balanced representation for both traditions, denominational and civic, without which very little of the much-needed hospital and health reform can be achieved, certainly in my community?

**Hon Mr Eves:** I respect what the honourable member is saying. I agree with what he's saying. I will make that recommendation to the Minister of Health so he will take your concerns, which are duly noted, and make sure they are satisfied with respect to the restructuring of the hospital board.

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, but if he's not here, I will ask it of the Deputy Premier. Last night I attended a meeting of Citizens for Local Democracy here in Toronto. There were over 600 people present at that meeting.

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** Go get Al.

**Mr Hampton:** I'll wait until the minister gets here so that he hears the question.

Last night I attended a meeting of Citizens for Local Democracy here in Toronto. There were over 600 people there. There's a tremendous groundswell building against your megacity scheme. People are angry at your destruction of their democratic rights. People at the meeting compared you and your government to the Family Compact Conservatives of 1837. Even a good semblance of William Lyon Mackenzie was there to denounce you.

We learned that 450 people now want to make representations to the committee on your bill, and more and more people are coming forward all the time. Will you give people in Toronto a guarantee, a commitment, that anyone who wants to address the committee about your megacity bill will be heard? Will you give them that commitment?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** We'll certainly try to accommodate everybody we possibly can, but I'm sure the leader of the third party knows that I don't think there has ever been a committee meeting, a committee hearing process, that has heard everyone who ever wanted to be heard.

What I would do is urge the opposition parties to assist us in ensuring that as many people as can be heard have the opportunity to be heard. If you put the bill through second reading and we can get it to committee as quickly



as possible, more people will have an opportunity to have their say. I'm sure the opposition parties will cooperate.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** Minister, that just isn't quite good enough. This isn't just an issue in Toronto. People across Metropolitan Toronto are upset about your mega-bill and people are meeting all over the place to talk about what they can do to at least get their voices heard and have you hear their reasoned and impassioned pleas for why your megacity scheme just won't work.

Just tonight there's going to be a major meeting in North York. This is the biggest right across Metropolitan Toronto. It's the biggest spontaneous grass-roots movement I think we've seen in a long, long time.

There have been lots of examples in the past where committees have indeed heard everyone who has asked to speak, especially on important issues like this. I want to say to you that the people of North York, Scarborough and Etobicoke also want to be heard, in addition to the people in downtown Toronto. I ask you this: Will you give a commitment that all those people will be heard — I want to repeat that — and will you also ensure that there will be full hearings not just here at Queen's Park but in each council chamber of each of the cities that have been affected by this bill? Will you guarantee that, Minister?

**Hon Mr Leach:** Again I'll repeat, if we get the cooperation of the opposition parties, and I'm sure they'll be glad to do that, if we can get this bill through second reading and into committee, that will give an opportunity for as many people as we can possibly fit in to give their views and opinions on our bill to create a single city.

I haven't talked to the House leader, but in discussion with the opposition House leaders, if they want to have the committee move around Metropolitan Toronto, I certainly wouldn't have any objections to that.

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN KINGSTON

**Mr Gary Fox (Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings):** My question today is for the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism. I campaigned on a platform of bringing jobs to my riding of Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings. Investing in rural Ontario is the key to jobs and growth not only for this generation but for our children's future. Minister, could you update the House on the recent economic expansion in the greater Kingston area?

**Hon William Saunderson (Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism):** I'm pleased to respond to the member for Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings. The good news is that the Kingston area is doing extremely well. In the Report on Business in the late summer, early fall, Kingston was recommended as one of the best places to do business.

I'd like to give the House four examples of just what is happening in Kingston at the present time: DuPont Canada is expanding, and that will mean 200 new construction jobs and 55 new production jobs by 1998; Bombardier has recently signed a \$48-million contract with Vancouver's SkyTrain; third, Higgins Manufacturing, which is a United Kingdom company, expects to

employ 100 people within three years; fourth and last, Celanese Canada has a new \$190-million expansion and it has created 60 new jobs and a boost of sales of \$250 million.

**Mr Fox:** Could you tell us what the key is to this highly successful period of growth?

**Hon Mr Saunderson:** In response to the supplementary, I'm pleased to say that there are four key points I'd like to make. I think they apply to all of Ontario, but particularly to Kingston.

First of all, the Kingston Area Economic Development Commission is very key to growth. We should be very proud of a civic organization such as that which is helping its community. I would recommend that to other communities.

Second, they have handled more than 6,200 industrial and small business inquiries in 1996 in that region, which shows the great interest in the Kingston area.

Third, they anticipate a continued healthy growth pattern in 1997. That's their report.

The fourth reason is Ontario's pro-business policy, encouraging economic development and jobs, promulgated by our government.

1510

#### IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** In the absence of the Premier, my question is to the Deputy Premier. It has to do with the information on Ipperwash that was released yesterday by the Premier's office. We all know that Ipperwash was the first instance where a first nations person has been killed in a land claim dispute. A senior OPP officer is facing charges.

The question I want to ask revolves around what seems to be a contradiction between the faxes and what the Premier has been saying. It's clear from the faxes that the local member, Mr Beaubien, was in constant contact with the Premier's office before the shooting. He mentioned several conversations and at least three faxes. It's also clear that the local member was told of the government plans. "I am prepared to go along with Mr Hodgson's proposals in dealing with the situation." He then went on to talk to the local paper, and it says here, "Queen's Park to Take Hard Line Against Park Occupiers." This appeared in a local paper only hours before the shooting.

The question is this: The Premier has said that the OPP were going to deal with this all on their own, but we now know that the local member was told of the plans and indicated to the local paper that it was the government's intention to take a hard line.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you, Minister.

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** I have no idea where the local paper got its information. I can only tell you what the Premier has said on numerous occasions. Actually, I think the correspondence you have, the faxes you have, the information you have, point out that at no time did the provincial government interfere or tell the OPP what it was to do with respect to this matter, nor should it.



**Mr Phillips:** I think the public probably understands why we need a public inquiry. The facts are clear. I just outlined them for you. Your local member said to the local paper — that's where they got it: Mr Beaubien, no one else. "Queen's Park to Take Hard Line Against Park Occupiers."

The local member later, in another fax, goes on to say to Mr King, a senior staff member of the Premier's office, with whom he was in constant contact virtually every day — several conversations before the shooting, several conversations the day of the shooting — Mr Beaubien says to the Premier's office, "I can take the heat, but I will not be the fall guy."

**Interjection:** That's a poor translation.

**Mr Phillips:** The member says that's a poor translation. I'm quoting directly from the member's own fax to the Premier's office. The member knew you planned to take a hard line. The member knew that then it went badly wrong; it was completely messed up, a tragic situation. Why did the member say he wouldn't be the fall guy and who did he assume would be the fall guy?

**Hon Mr Eves:** The only plan that the provincial government had was to seek an injunction, which it was in the process of doing at that particular time. With respect to the second part of your question, I have no idea why the member would use that language or that tone. Quite frankly, I don't agree with that tone.

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a question for the Attorney General regarding the family support plan. It's been almost five months now since you laid off 290 experienced family support plan staff and closed the eight regional offices. As a result, women and children who used to receive regular support payments now are not. Thousands of families have suffered and continue to suffer serious financial hardship as a result.

Let me raise with you the case of Barbara Thompson, who used to receive \$714.97 every month from her ex-husband. She is now owed \$1,543.06, even though the payor's employer, the RCMP, has confirmed to her in writing that cheques were sent to the family support plan on October 29, November 27 and December 27. Minister, can you tell me where Barbara's money is and why you're financing your portion of the tax cut on her back?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** As I've said before, I won't respond to individual cases. What I can say is that yesterday, \$1.8 million was sent out to almost 5,700 families. In December 1996, \$32,309,983 was sent out, compared to \$29,640,220 in 1994. The money is getting out. It's getting out in greater amounts than it's ever been sent out before, and it's going out faster.

**Ms Martel:** Minister, everyone knows the money that's now going out is money that was owed to recipients from August, September, October, November and December. You're not fooling anyone by trying to tell people that you're sending out more money than ever before. Your colleague the member for Grey-Owen Sound was right yesterday when he told the Toronto Sun that

the whole thing is in chaos and people aren't receiving the money they are owed, and your rhetoric doesn't help Barbara Thompson.

The Attorney General also announced in mid-September that his ministry would pay for any additional costs that recipients incurred because of a delay in receiving cheques, specifically bank charges or fees on the payment of utility bills that were late.

Minister, in mid-December you again confirmed that your ministry would pay for those things, but you told the media that no one so far had applied for this compensation. Can you tell the House today what specific action you have taken to notify payors and recipients that they might be entitled to compensation and how they can apply?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** The family support plan will pay any expenses incurred because of any significant and unusual delay in payments going out to recipients during September and October who previously had regular payments. This includes NSF cheque penalty charges, penalty charges for late mortgage or rent payments and utility bills. Clients who have claims for such expenses may submit receipts to the director of the family support plan. Staff will review these claims on an individual basis.

**Ms Martel:** How are you telling these people? They are to read it in the newspapers? Is that how you notify them? On TV?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** The member wanted this information. I'm now giving it to her. I would think she might want to wait and let me give it to her. Clients will be able to receive information on compensation through the automated telephone system by calling 1-800-830-4353.

#### TRAPPING IN URBAN AREAS

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** My question today is for the Minister of Natural Resources. I've been receiving a number of calls to my constituency office in Scarborough Centre recently from citizens of my riding concerning a trapper licensed by the Ministry of Natural Resources who is using leghold traps within my riding to trap small animals.

My constituents have expressed a great and understandable concern about the danger this presents to children and pets within the area. As the minister understands, my riding of Scarborough Centre is an urban riding. Can the minister please inform the House as to the government's policy concerning trapping in urban areas?

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines):** I appreciate the question from the member for Scarborough Centre. There has been quite a bit of public controversy about this. The MNR licenses about three trappers in the GTA. They're hired by private land owners to control nuisance animals. They do not work for the MNR but they have to follow the property section of the Game and Fish Act, and that restricts that the live traps are used for raccoons and a leghold trap with pads for larger animals.

I would like to mention, though, that recent press reports have indicated that the city of Scarborough



intends to ban trapping within its borders. I'd like to just inform the House, and I'm sure everyone knows, that municipal bylaws, especially those relating to firearm discharge, also restrict trapping activities in builtup areas. The city of Toronto has established a bylaw which restricts the use of leghold traps in that city. As I've indicated, the city of Scarborough indicates that as well.

**Mr Newman:** As the minister mentioned, the city of Scarborough has announced its intention to ban trapping in the city. I will be pleased to present that private bill in the House on the city's behalf.

By way of supplementary, will the minister please explain why the Ministry of Natural Resources allows trapping in urban areas.

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** We allow trapping in urban areas under the prescription of the Game and Fish Act under the property section. As I mentioned, the trapper is not hired directly by the MNR; they're hired by the property owner to control nuisance animals. We license it and get information on how to control rabies and other information on the animals.

I would like to mention that of the three trappers who are licensed, they probably contain about 12 animals each per year on average. Our licensing requirements maintain standards that make it safe for children and household pets to be around — as I mentioned, the special protection pads and the live traps.

1520

#### SOCIAL, COMMUNITY HEALTH AND HOUSING SERVICES

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services, regarding the statement she made today but also the announcement she made in this House of change of government policy. We know the minister today threw in the garbage can her own report on child care. I would ask her if she would clarify for this House exactly what she meant in her response to the member for Beaches-Woodbine when she said that child care would now be a mandatory program in the province.

Just to remind the minister, at the present time the province funds 80%, and that encourages municipalities to provide the program because they only have to provide 20%. The province is cutting their contribution to 50%, and I'd like the minister to stand in her place and explain the new government policy that is going to ensure that children across this province are not left in jeopardy and will have equal access to child care as a result of her policy announcement today.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** One of the reasons we did the child care review was because people in this province do not have access to child care when they need it and we have to do a better job at providing that child care access to them. As a matter of fact, one of the things that came up in the child care review was the fact that the municipalities could, and in many cases wanted to, play a better and bigger role in the provision of child care. Where they have been doing that, it has been working extremely well.

That's one of the reasons we are making it a mandatory program that will be provided by municipalities.

#### PETITIONS

##### FIRE SAFETY

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This petition is in response to Bill 84, and it's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the firefighters of Sudbury and Ontario are very concerned about Bill 84;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 is unfair;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 is discriminatory;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 endangers the wellbeing of the people of Ontario;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 requires extensive changes;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 needs broad provincial public hearings before implementation;

"We, the undersigned, therefore petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand the Solicitor General to rewrite Bill 84 before being enacted into law and only after extensive public hearings across Ontario."

I affix my signature to the petition, as I agree with it.

##### ÉCOLES À CHARTE

**M. Gilles Pouliot (Lac-Nipigon) :** Adressée à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

«Attendu que le gouvernement de l'Ontario se penche présentement sur la réforme du système de l'éducation et que l'implantation d'écoles à charte représente une option à considérer ;

«Attendu que le gouvernement ne possède pas de politique en matière de création d'écoles à charte et que le ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation étudie actuellement le fonctionnement d'écoles à charte existantes ;

«Attendu que le Collège catholique Samuel-Genest est maintenant voué à perdre sa mission, son caractère particulier et sa réputation suite aux récentes décisions du Conseil des écoles catholiques de langue française de la région d'Ottawa-Carleton ;

«Attendu que la création d'un projet pilote d'écoles à charte à titre expérimental dans le contexte ontarien pourrait accélérer le processus d'élaboration d'une politique en matière d'écoles à charte,

«Nous, soussignés, adressons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario la pétition suivante :

«Nous, parents et élèves, et élèves du Collège catholique Samuel-Genest d'Ottawa, demandons que le gouvernement de l'Ontario accorde à notre collège le statut d'école à charte à titre de projet pilote pour implantation dès septembre 1997.»

##### SCHOOL FACILITIES

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** I'm very pleased to hear the last petition on charter schools implemented by a member of the third party.

I have some petitions here with respect to the Barrhaven high schools, which reads as follows:



"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:  
 "Whereas the community of Barrhaven lacks any secondary schools to educate the large number of students living in this area;

"Whereas Barrhaven is the most rapidly growing community in Ottawa-Carleton;

"Whereas the National Capital Commission's greenbelt severs the community of Barrhaven from Nepean, forcing many students to take potentially dangerous, unsupervised, hour-long trips on public transportation in order to travel to school;

"Whereas many high schools in Nepean are significantly overcrowded;

"Whereas both the Carleton Board of Education and the Carleton Roman Catholic Separate School Board have undertaken significant cost-saving measures to help reduce the construction costs of these high schools;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We strongly urge the Minister of Education to recognize the unique educational needs of Nepean and provide the funding required to build both of the proposed high schools for Barrhaven."

I have included my own signature thereto, and the minister has given \$20 million to complete these two schools.

#### FIRE SAFETY

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** I have a petition in response to Bill 84 as well.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the firefighters of Thunder Bay and Ontario are very concerned about Bill 84;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 is unfair;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 is discriminatory;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 endangers the wellbeing of the people of Ontario;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 requires extensive changes; and

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 needs broad provincial public hearings before implementation;

"We, the undersigned, therefore petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand the Solicitor General to rewrite Bill 84 before being enacted into law and only after extensive public hearings across Ontario."

I'm very proud to sign my name to this petition.

#### PROTECTION OF WORKERS

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have signatures of 3,154 members of United Food and Commercial Workers, Local 1000A, sent to me by their president, Dan Gilbert, and the secretary-treasurer, Brian Docherty, and the executive vice-president, Kevin Corporon. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and Premier Harris:

"Whereas we, the undersigned, oppose your government's plan to dismantle the workers' compensation system including reducing benefits; excluding claims for repetitive strain injuries, muscle injuries, strains, sprains, stress, harassment and most occupational diseases;

eliminating pension supplements; eliminating our employers' legal obligation to re-employ us after injury; handing over control of our claims to our employers for the first four to six weeks after injury; privatizing workers' compensation to large insurance companies; integrating sick benefits into workers' compensation; eliminating or restricting the Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal, WCAT; including eliminating worker representation on the Workers' Compensation Board and eliminating the bipartite board of directors;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, demand a safe workplace, compensation if we are injured, no reduction in benefits, improved re-employment and vocational rehabilitation, an independent appeal structure with worker representation and that the WCAT be left intact and the bipartite board of directors be reinstated."

On behalf of my caucus colleagues, I add my name to theirs.

#### MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES OFFICE

**Mr W. Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew):** I'm presenting this petition on behalf of the Honourable Bob Runciman.

"We, the undersigned, beg leave to petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources has announced the closure of its Brockville office, thereby ceasing all operations from that location; and

"Whereas this closure will seriously reduce the fisheries, wildlife, forest management and environment in general in the united counties of Leeds and Grenville; and

"Whereas the residents of this community acknowledge that reduction in public employees is a necessary factor in decreasing government spending; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario already owns the present location and no operational savings can be realized by closing this office;

"We, the undersigned residents of this community, urge the government of Ontario to reverse this decision so that the Brockville area office may continue to provide the services required for the management of our natural resources of the united counties of Leeds and Grenville."

The petition is signed by 222 individuals and I am pleased to table it for the minister.

#### NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final



report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I've affixed my signature.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** I have a petition here to the House from the United Paperworkers International Union in Terrace Bay, Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Harris government has begun a process to open the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario; and

"Whereas this act is the single most important piece of legislation for working people since it is designed to protect our lives, safety and health while at work and allow us to return home to our families in the same condition in which we left; and

"Whereas the government has made it clear that they intend to water down the act and weaken the rights of workers under the law, including the right to know, the right to participate and especially the right to refuse; and

"Whereas this government has already watered down proper training of certified committee members;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario not to alter the Occupational Health and Safety Act or erode the rights of workers any further and ensure strict enforcement of the legislation."

I have signed my name.

#### FIREARMS CONTROL

**Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has passed Bill C-68, An Act respecting firearms and other weapons; and

"Whereas we welcome real gun control and support those portions of Bill C-68 which provide tougher penalties for the criminal use of firearms, new offences related to firearms smuggling and trafficking; and

"Whereas existing laws requiring the registration of handguns have done little to reduce the number of crimes committed with handguns or lower the volume of handguns smuggled into Canada; and

"Whereas the national gun registration provisions of Bill C-68 will result in a massive misallocation of the limited resources available to law enforcement agencies, with no practical effect on the traffic of illegal firearms or the use of guns by violent criminals; and

"Whereas the gun registration provisions of Bill C-68 will take police officers off the streets and involve them in bureaucracy rather than fighting crime, and will make the task of real gun control more difficult and dangerous for police officers;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the province of Ontario to continue to urge the government of Canada to repeal from Bill C-68 those provisions for a compulsory registration of all firearms."

This was presented to me by a group from the Windsor area and I affix my name to it.

#### ONTARIO CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTE

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislature and the Solicitor General that reads as follows:

"Whereas we, the undersigned, believe that helping reduce crime and abuse in our communities is our responsibility as employees of the Ministry of Correctional Services, as professionals in related fields and as concerned citizens;

"That closing institutions which provide specialized services to women and treatment to men does not achieve that goal;

"That physical, emotional and sexual abuse is often transmitted from one generation to the next, with tremendous cost to society;

"That treatment aimed at breaking this cycle must include the abuser so that another generation of children is not raised with the same destructive lessons;

"That," as Mr Ross Virgo has stated, 'the Ontario Correctional Institute is a therapeutic community known around the world for their techniques';

"That research statistics support anecdotal evidence that we are effective in changing abusive behaviour;

"That a therapeutic community cannot exist in a superprison;

"In closing, this petition asks that the government save victims and money by keeping what works open."

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Further petitions? The chair recognizes the member for Sault Ste Marie.

#### ADJOURNMENT MOTION

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** Mr Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** The member for Sault Ste Marie moves adjournment of the House. Is it the wish of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members; there will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1533 to 1603.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. Mr Martin has moved adjournment of the House.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 27; the nays are 58.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

Petitions? The Chair recognizes the member for York Mills.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Mr David Turnbull (York Mills):** I move that we now proceed to introduction of bills.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** The member for York Mills has moved that we proceed to introduction of bills.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members; there will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1606 to 1636.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Mr Turnbull has moved that the House proceed to introduction of bills.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed will please rise and remain standing.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 56; the nays are 21.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### POLICE SERVICES AMENDMENT ACT, 1997

#### LOI DE 1997 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES SERVICES POLICIERS

Mr Runciman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 105, An Act to renew the partnership between the province, municipalities and the police and to enhance community safety / Projet de loi 105, Loi visant à renouveler le partenariat entre la province, les municipalités et la police et visant à accroître la sécurité de la collectivité.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members; this will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1638 to 1643.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mr Runciman has moved first reading of Bill 105. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time.

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Gilchrist, Steve	Parker, John L.
Baird, John R.	Grimmett, Bill	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Barrett, Toby	Hardeman, Ernie	Ross, Lillian
Bassett, Isabel	Hamick, Charles	Runciman, Robert W.
Beaubien, Marcel	Hastings, John	Sampson, Rob
Boushy, Dave	Hudak, Tim	Shea, Derwyn
Brown, Jim	Johns, Helen	Sheehan, Frank
Carr, Gary	Johnson, Bert	Skarica, Toni
Carroll, Jack	Jordan, W. Leo	Smith, Bruce
Chudleigh, Ted	Kells, Morley	Spina, Joseph
Danford, Harry	Leach, Al	Tascona, Joseph N.
Elliott, Brenda	Marland, Margaret	Tilson, David
Eves, Ernie L.	Martiniuk, Gerry	Turnbull, David
Fisher, Barbara	Maves, Bart	Vankoughnet, Bill
Flaherty, Jim	Munro, Julia	Villeneuve, Noble
Ford, Douglas B.	Newman, Dan	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Fox, Gary	O'Toole, John	Wood, Bob
Froese, Tom	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Young, Terence H.
Galt, Doug	Palladini, Al	

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time.

#### Nays

Bartolucci, Rick	Crozier, Bruce	Martin, Tony
Bisson, Gilles	Curling, Alvin	Miclash, Frank
Bradley, James J.	Duncan, Dwight	Patten, Richard
Brown, Michael A.	Gerretsen, John	Pouliot, Gilles
Castrilli, Annamarie	Gravelle, Michael	Ramsay, David
Christopherson, David	Kormos, Peter	Silipo, Tony
Cleary, John C.	Kwinter, Monte	Wood, Len
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	
Cordiano, Joseph	Laughren, Floyd	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 56, the nays are 25.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** The amendments I have introduced today will bring fairness to the way Ontario taxpayers pay for their policing; foster improved local accountability of police; and eliminate waste, duplication and overlap in the system of police oversight.

By amending the Police Services Act, the District Municipality of Muskoka Act, the Municipal Act, the Private Investigators and Security Guards Act and the Regional Municipalities Act, this new act will ensure that every municipality is treated fairly.

Finally, the changes introduced by this bill will provide local governments with the tools they need to provide the most effective system of policing to protect the public.

Mr Speaker, I move that we now proceed to orders of the day.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Introduction of bills. The member for Cochrane South.

## ADJOURNMENT MOTION

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** Mr Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** The member for Cochrane South moves the adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members; this will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1649 to 1719.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. Will the members please take their seats.

The member for Dovercourt, I would ask you to take your seat.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** I would take my seat, except I'm not sure what difference it makes when the government doesn't want to listen.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. Just a reminder that procedures are created by us.

Mr Bisson, the member for Cochrane South, has moved the adjournment of the House.



All those in favour of the motion will please rise.

All those opposed will please rise.

I would ask your attention, please. I feel that one of the most important rights in this House is to have the right of voting. This is a right given to us by the population, and I would ask to vote again.

All those in favour of Mr Bisson's adjournment of the House will please rise.

All those opposed will please rise.

Please take your seats. I just want to let you know that for the Speaker it really is an untenable situation. I will take 10 minutes' recess and reflect on this situation.

*The House recessed from 1724 to 1734.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please let me express my own feelings about this situation. The Speaker is elected by you. The procedures are created by you. If you don't show any respect vis-à-vis the procedures, you don't respect yourselves. I'm going to call the vote again and I ask you, all of you, to vote. It is so important. Please don't challenge the Chair. You're challenging yourselves by challenging the Chair.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed will please rise and remain standing.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 19; the nays are 52.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

Introduction of Bills. The member for Oakwood.

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** I have a bill to amend the Highway Traffic Act. Can I have a brief explanation of the bill?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Move your bill.

**Mr Colle:** I move the Highway Traffic Act amendment, which provides for the suspension of a person's driver's licence for a specific period of time if the person is convicted of an offence under the Criminal Code of Canada for driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs. The bill would require the person to successfully complete a course respecting drug or alcohol abuse before the suspension is lifted. As you know —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** You've got to bring the bill down and then you get a chance — this is very unusual, actually.

Introduction of bills. Orders of the day.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** No, introduction of bills, Speaker.

**The Speaker:** No, I went to orders of the day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### CITY OF TORONTO ACT, 1996

### LOI DE 1996 SUR LA CITÉ DE TORONTO

Mr Leach moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 103, An Act to replace the seven existing municipal governments of Metropolitan Toronto by incorporating a new municipality to be known as the City of Toronto / Projet de loi 103, Loi visant à remplacer les sept administrations municipales existantes de la communauté urbaine de Toronto en constituant une nouvelle municipalité appelée la cité de Toronto.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Mr Leach.

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** We were using the rules exactly. We were using the rules, every single one that is left. That is exactly what we were doing.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** We went to — let me just say —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** To the members, please — the members for Oakville South and Etobicoke-Lakeshore. I said, after the member for Oakwood —

**Mr Silipo:** I was being insulted over here.

**The Speaker:** I'm speaking now directly to the member for Dovercourt: I didn't hear it, I'm sorry.

I said directly after the member for Oakwood — his bill wasn't seen to be in order. I called for introduction of bills.

1740

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** He was up; he stood up.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** The members for Lake Nipigon and Fort York.

**Mr Pouliot:** He is right beside me. He stood up.

**The Speaker:** The member for Lake Nipigon, I ask you to come to order. I looked very directly down this side of the room. I called for introduction of bills. No one stood. I looked at the table.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** You were like this.

**The Speaker:** Order. I looked at the table, who also didn't see anyone standing, and then I simply said, "Orders of the day." Now that's as plain as it can be.

I say to the members for Dovercourt, Fort York and Lake Nipigon, I understand what we're doing in this place. I gave the opportunity for any member to introduce a bill. You didn't stand. Those are the rules.

**Mr Bisson:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: If you would just bear with me for a minute, what had happened was that the member from Oakwood got up to introduce a bill. There was a problem in regard to the way the bill was worded. There was a discussion going on on that side. When you called for further introduction of bills, the member for Dovercourt was up on his feet. There were two people up at the same time.

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** He was not.

**The Speaker:** I will say very directly to the member for Cochrane South —

**Mr Pouliot:** He was.

**The Speaker:** The member for Lake Nipigon, please.

I'll tell you this: The member for Oakwood stood. I stood when it was clear it wasn't in order. I said, "This is very unusual." Normally the bill is prepared and the text is before me.

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** There are a lot of unusual things happening here.

**The Speaker:** The member for Cochrane North, I can only explain what the situation was. I said, "Your bill isn't in order." I then called for introduction of bills. All I can ask is the members. When I called for introduction of bills, I looked again. No one was standing. I checked



with the table clerks. They saw no one standing. I then went to orders of the day.

**Mr Silipo:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker —

**The Speaker:** Let me just say this quickly to the member for Dovercourt: I'll recognize you for a point of order. I want to say this: I will hear your point of order. I have now heard I think it's three points of order on this issue, or at least I addressed the issue. I'll listen to your point of order and I'd like to move on at that point. The member for Dovercourt.

**Mr Silipo:** I realize that we are now into orders of the day and I'm beyond quibbling with you on that. I disagree with what you've done, but I'm not questioning your ruling. I would ask you simply this, because we all know what's going on here today. We all know why we have resorted to these practices.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Members, come to order.

**Mr Silipo:** It's the only thing this government has left us in terms of protecting the rights of the democratic process in this place. What I would ask of you, Speaker, is simply this —

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** You don't want to be here in January and February and have to work, is that your problem?

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Minister of Finance, member for Perth, come to order. I don't want any more heckling. The member for Dovercourt.

**Mr Silipo:** We realize that we have lost the battle for this day, but we have just lost a battle for this day. Let the government be warned that tomorrow and the next day we will be far better prepared than we were today.

What I would ask of you, Speaker, is this, because I don't think it's going to change your ruling on this: When there was the confusion about the member for Oakwood, the introduction of the bills, I quite honestly did not hear you indicate that the bill was out of order for some reason. The reason I say that is because I was still sitting here expecting something to happen with that bill, all right? Then you simply went from there into a very quick reiteration of introduction of bills and then quickly over to the other side. I think that's a bit unfair and that's what I would ask you to consider.

I don't know whether it's going to be enough for you to change your mind on this one at this point. I think it should.

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** Tony, you are challenging the Chair.

**Mr Silipo:** I'm not challenging the Chair. I'm saying that's why you didn't see me up on that instant when you said, "Further introduction of bills." But I was prepared to stand in my place. I did not do so at that instant because I thought you were —

**The Speaker:** Member for Dovercourt, I appreciate what you're saying —

**Mr Pouliot:** You missed the pack.

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** He is right; it is rue.

**The Speaker:** The member for Lake Nipigon, and the member for Sault Ste Marie, I understand completely that you probably fully agree with the member for Dovercourt. I understand that. All I can say to the member for Dovercourt is that I wasn't trying to usurp the process, I wasn't trying to get around the ring any quicker than normal. If it seemed that way, I'm apologizing. But I did say as clearly as I could, "Introduction of bills."

**Mr Bisson:** But you didn't say he was out of order.

**The Speaker:** Member for Cochrane South, I can only tell you I did my best to ensure that we followed the procedures. Now, when we check Hansard tomorrow, which we will all do, we can see whether or not those words were in fact stated. I can't categorically say his bill was out of order; I can remember saying "very unusual" to not have the work in order.

**Mr Silipo:** We didn't hear that, Speaker.

**The Speaker:** I apologize for not hearing it. If you didn't hear —

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Scarborough East, you're not being helpful.

So I appreciate what you're saying. I tried to act as fair and non-partisan as I could, and impartial, and I did say it as loudly and clearly as I could. I took the time to check the table to see if they saw anyone that I didn't see. Nobody was up. I apologize if in fact you were trying to get up or I did not say it loudly enough.

Okay. Now we're at the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Hon Mr Leach:** Today I move second reading of Bill 103, the act that will amalgamate the seven municipal governments in Metro into one city of Toronto. When we introduced the act on December 17, we knew it was going to be controversial, but we also knew that it was the right decision and that we had the courage to do the right thing.

You don't have to be a rocket scientist to understand why a single unified city of Toronto makes good sense; you just have to ask the right questions. Ask anyone, "Do you want lower taxes?" Most people would answer yes. Ask them, do they want smaller government, do we have too many politicians, too many layers of government? Most people would say yes, yes and yes. But when we say, "Let's eliminate this particular level of government in the GTA, or let's amalgamate these particular municipalities or get rid of the duplication of this specific service," people say: "Hey, wait a minute. Maybe we should think about this a little longer."

The truth is that we, and I mean all of us, have been thinking about this issue for a long, long time. There are literally dozens of studies that have looked at municipal restructuring in the greater Toronto area. That includes a study done by KPMG that showed that amalgamation in Metro Toronto can save taxpayers up to \$865 million over the next three years and \$300 million a year thereafter, and it includes the recommendation by the Who Does What panel that a strong, unified central core would help the entire GTA prosper and compete in the international marketplace.

Amalgamation of some local services has been recommended by the Metro mayors; in fact, two proposals



came in from the mayors in just the last two years. Both the GTA Task Force and the GTA review panel recommended a wholesale governance review for this region.

So the time for studies and review is over. It's time to act and it's time to bring about change that will ensure that Canada's greatest city enters the 21st century strong, united and ready to meet the needs of its citizens. That means a local governance structure that will save money, remove barriers to growth and investment, and help create jobs.

But the truth is that even when people agree that we need less government, fewer politicians, lower costs and less duplication and overlap, when people are finally faced with real change, especially change of this magnitude, they get uncomfortable, and we understand that. But we all know that change is necessary. Change is what keeps cities vibrant and vital. It helps regions to grow and prosper and it keeps us in step with the rest of the world. Change is needed in the greater Toronto area and it's needed in Metropolitan Toronto.

There's an old saying. When things are in a muddle, we say we're at sixes and sevens, and that fits our situation today in Toronto. Metropolitan Toronto has seven governments, six local municipalities, seven roads departments, six fire departments, seven parks departments, seven planning departments, and 106 municipal politicians. The number of politicians and bureaucrats and planning offices and economic development departments would be funny if it didn't point so firmly to the fact that we're sadly overgoverned.

Fortune magazine called greater Toronto the best place in the world to work in and to raise a family, but today Metro Toronto is facing global competition and it can't just rest on its laurels. At a minimum, just to maintain its position in the international marketplace, it has to move forward, and right now we're not. Recent studies show that Toronto is not growing as fast as the cities that we compete against for business and jobs. Businesses and industries are leaving instead of coming here, and jobs are not being created as quickly. Our outdated infrastructure is not meeting the needs of companies that have to compete in the global marketplace. Just when new infrastructure and services are so important to economic growth, the municipal tax base in Metro is shrinking.

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These problems simply have to be solved, and the only way to solve them is for everyone to work together. But how can that happen if municipalities compete with each other for growth in investment, if municipal politicians protect their own turf instead of working together to move the entire region forward?

That's why we knew we had to take action on governance and that's why we were prepared to make the right decision and take the political heat we knew would follow. One critic of the new act says that amalgamation will bring an end to democracy as we know it.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** Yes, you're bringing an end to democracy all right.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I say it's just the opposite. A single, unified Toronto will bring greater —

*Interruption.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I will not say it again to the galleries. I will not stand for that. If it happens again, we will clear the galleries.

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** But Al promised the opposite fifteen months ago.

**The Speaker:** The member for Scarborough-Agincourt I appreciate that, but what happened has nothing to do with this place. I will clear the galleries.

The Minister for Municipal Affairs.

**Hon Mr Leach:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I say it's just the opposite. A single unified Toronto will bring greater democracy. Today, with so much duplication and overlap, taxpayers have no idea who is accountable for what in their neighbourhood. Under the provisions of the new City of Toronto Act, people will have a very clear idea of who is responsible and who is accountable. This act is not just about efficiency and cost saving. It's also about making government truly representative, truly accountable and truly responsible to the people who elect it, and that's what democracy really means.

The province has been accused of taking away the authority of elected officials of the seven municipal governments because we appointed a board of trustees to oversee financial transactions during the transition period. But the board of trustees is not going to be involved in the day-to-day decisions that affect the residents of this area. Those decisions will continue to be made by the duly elected municipal politicians throughout the transition period.

The trustees' mandate is to make sure that municipal expenditures and municipal assets, assets that belong to the people, are safeguarded during this time of change. Part of the trustees' mandate will be to review severance packages. Given the practice of some city governments, that's only prudent and in the best interests of the taxpayers. Another part of their mandate will be to review contracts that extend beyond January 1998. I am sure everyone would agree that only makes common sense, especially at a time of so much change.

The trustees will also have the power to review sales of assets, and if there was ever any doubt about whether that power was necessary, it disappeared on December 16. That's the day when East York council voted to explore options for giving away public property to a non-profit foundation, giving away buildings built and paid for by the taxpayers of East York. Having a board of trustees that can watch over issues like that is definitely in the public interest.

We've also heard some politicians say that the advice of the board of trustees does not have to be recognized and that they have no legal right to do their job until the legislation is passed. That's technically correct. However, as the trustees' right to examine municipal decisions will be retroactive to the day this legislation was introduced, it is in everyone's interests to cooperate with them. In fact, the trustees have already had a very productive meeting with the chief administrative officers from the current Metro area municipalities.

**Mr Phillips:** You were going to run against me.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I would have beat you too.

We're listening to their advice and benefiting from their experience, and we are already contemplating some amendments —

**Mr Phillips:** You didn't have the guts to do it, Al. I remember that you didn't have the guts to do it. You told me that.

**The Speaker:** Order. I think the members have to understand that sometimes there's a little fluidity to this place. The member from Scarborough must understand the situation, I'm sure. I think we have a very, very short period of time until 6 of the clock, and if we can just keep our cool, we can make it.

**Hon Mr Leach:** We're listening to the advice and benefiting from the experience of the CAOs and we're already contemplating some amendments to Bill 103. These administrative changes will improve the transition to the new city of Toronto. The trustees are there to protect the taxpayer, and that should be important to all of us. We urge municipalities to work with them.

Another very hot button in this whole debate has been the referendum. Referendums have their place. I would be the first to agree to that. Public input is always important. But we also believe that in some cases there are more effective ways to gain public input. With respect to one Toronto, we believe the best way is through the legislative process and committee hearings, and that's going to happen over the next couple of weeks. I know the opposition will be pleased to move this bill so we can get to hearings.

Why don't we think a referendum will work? First, what question are you going to put on the ballot? What question would be most representative? "Do you want your city to be part of one Toronto?" "Do you want to keep seven cities?" "Do you want to keep seven governments and maintain the status quo?" "Would you prefer four governments?" There are at least 20 legitimate questions that could be put on the ballot and the outcome —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Hon Mr Leach:** The outcome would be the same. The outcome of a referendum like that would be inconsistent and inconclusive.

How would you factor in voter turnout and the population it represented? Already Metro area municipalities are split on how to hold a referendum. The results will be suspect, they will not be binding, and the cost to the taxpayers is going to be enormous, millions of dollars.

Public opinion is important, but we believe hearings through the committee process —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned till 1:30 of the clock tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1758.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO  
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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Brampton South / -Sud	Clement, Tony (PC)	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
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Chatham-Kent	Carroll, Jack (PC)	Lincoln	Sheehan, Frank (PC)
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Essex-Kent	Hoy, Pat (L)	Nickel Belt	Laughren, Floyd (ND)
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Etobicoke-Rexdale	Hastings, John (PC)	Oakville South / -Sud	Carr, Gary (PC)
Etobicoke West / -Ouest	<b>Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris</b> (PC) Speaker / Président	Oakwood	Colle, Mike (L)
Fort William	McLeod, Lyn (L)	Oriole	Caplan, Elinor (L)
Fort York	Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)
Frontenac-Addington	Vankoughnet, Bill (PC)	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)
Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Ottawa East / -Est	Grandmaître, Bernard (L)
Guelph	Elliott, Brenda (PC)	Ottawa-Rideau	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)
Halton Centre / -Centre	Young, Terence H. (PC)	Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
Halton North / -Nord	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Ottawa West / -Ouest	Chiarelli, Robert (L)
Hamilton Centre / -Centre	Christopherson, David (ND)		
Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)		
Hamilton Mountain	Pettit, Trevor (PC)		
Hamilton West / -Ouest	Ross, Lillian (PC)		

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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 15 January 1997**

**Mercredi 15 janvier 1997**



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 15 January 1997

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 15 janvier 1997

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### FERRY SERVICES

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** I'm angry and upset at the announcement made today by the Minister of Transportation in which he says that municipalities should assume full responsibility for operating and financing of ferry services that link local or county roads. He states, as a matter of fact, that the ferries that will no longer receive provincial funding include the two serving Howe Island and those serving Amherst, Wolfe and Pelee islands.

In my case, that means that on Amherst Island, which collects \$168,000 of taxes per year, taxes would have to increase fivefold. Wolfe Island, which collects \$370,000 per year, would have to increase eightfold, and the same thing with Howe Island, which only collects \$80,000 per year. It would have to raise its taxes by eightfold as well. These are communities that have anywhere from 250 to 1,200 full-time residents who operate farms and small businesses and ferries are the sole transportation and lifelines to the mainland.

As the township of Amherst Island has stated, a decision to eliminate subsidies to ferries that connect local or county roads would signal the death of the island community that was incorporated in 1860 and has existed for over 200 years as have all the three communities. As a matter of fact, during the last election campaign Mike Harris campaigned on a promise that he would never, never impose ferry fees on Wolfe Island. He stated so on a billboard. Not only has he broken that promise but he has in effect been saying that it's no longer the province's responsibility. This is callous, reprehensible and violates the trust that he has with the people —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you very much.

### RAMADAN

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** On Friday, January 10, over 200,000 Muslims in Ontario started observing the holy month of Ramadan. During this month, which falls in the year 1417 of the Muslim calendar, Muslim Canadians will be fasting from dawn to dusk, abstaining from all food and drink. On behalf of the NDP, I wish the Muslim community a happy Ramadan and hope that this exercise in physical and spiritual self-discipline and self-restraint bears fruit.

One of the reasons our Muslim community goes through this exercise of restraint and sacrifice is to empathize with the hunger and poverty of hundreds of millions of people around the world who barely exist on one square meal a day. This poverty and hunger is now creeping into Canada and Ontario. With an increasing number of children going hungry to school and the rise of homeless people this winter, all Ontarians should join the Muslim community in bringing the issue of hunger and poverty to the forefront.

Prophet Muhammad of Islam told a gathering of Muslims in the city of Medina a day before the advent of the holy month, "Ramadan is a month of showing patience and sharing the pain and grief of fellow human beings." These words are relevant to this day. We all need to join our fellow Muslim Canadians in sharing and building a society where hunger and poverty would be eliminated. Again, to all Muslim Canadians, on behalf of the NDP, I wish you happy Ramadan and look forward to a joyous Eed Ul Fitar next month.

### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington):** I rise this afternoon to recognize the three hospitals in Wellington as they actively work to reduce their costs while maintaining important primary care services in their communities.

The Louise Marshall Hospital in Mount Forest and the Palmerston and District Hospital have formed a strategic alliance to bring together their administration services. By April 1, when these services have been merged, they anticipate savings of \$300,000. Groves Memorial Community Hospital in Fergus recently announced a restructuring committee studying the future role of the hospital. The committee plans to consult with the community it serves to determine which hospital services are necessary priorities for the future. The completion date for this project is set for June 1997.

I want to commend the boards and the staffs of the hospitals in Wellington. They deserve a great deal of credit for working towards solutions.

In its efforts to deliver quality health care at the most reasonable cost, the provincial government must consider the different needs of urban and rural areas. Rural hospitals are often the only health care facilities locally available to people in small communities, often some considerable distance from larger urban centres. People in Wellington need access to primary care within reasonable driving distance. This is especially true in winter, when blizzards in our area as recently as last year isolated some communities for two whole days.

While models of community-based care are well-suited to urban areas, in rural areas, because of large distances,



it's often more cost-efficient to deliver services in local hospitals. I support the Minister of Health as he proceeds with the reform of the health care system, and I encourage him to take into account the vital importance of Wellington's three hospitals to the health care needs of the people —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you very much.

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** To say that this has been a frightening week for the people of Ontario is a massive understatement. Yesterday the Minister of Community and Social Services dumped on our municipalities responsibilities to fund welfare, long-term care, public health, child care and even ground ambulance service. Many of our northern communities are also now being told they must pay for their policing.

When one matches this with the removal of education from our property taxes, the Minister of Municipal Affairs says it will be revenue-neutral or a wash. It's hogwash. He knows it and the government knows it.

Even a preliminary estimate in my community of Thunder Bay shows that these announcements only as of yesterday constitute a massive dumping or downloading to our municipalities which will leave our city with a huge budget shortfall. God knows what it will mean for many other smaller northern communities.

What will we hear today? The Minister of Culture will tell the Legislature that all provincial funding for the operation of our libraries is gone, another dump on the municipalities. She'll mention library boards, which sounds good and protective, but to what end? All our municipalities are going to be forced into a position where they will have to set priorities: either massively increase property taxes or decrease or completely drop services. Libraries will now be competing with a variety of other incredibly important services.

Today I have in the gallery the executive of the Ontario Library Association: the executive director, the president and the past president. I call on the Minister of Culture today to meet with that executive of the Ontario Library Association this afternoon, after she makes her statement, after question period. Minister, will you meet with the Ontario Library Association?

### TRANSIT SERVICES

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** This government continues to cut and slash without restraint and with a viciousness and a violence that's unprecedented and with no regard for the damage that it leaves in its wake.

Today we learn that this government doesn't care about public transit here in the province of Ontario, either in Toronto or in communities like Welland and so many others across Ontario. Let me tell you that the people of Welland, over the course of years, have built a public transit system because they recognize that's important for young people to get around within their community, it's important for seniors because it gives mobility to seniors who use public transit in Welland, and I tell you it's important to the poor.

It's also significant for those who recognize that public transit is environmentally and economically superior when you're travelling about your city. This government is intent on destroying Welland Transit, as it's intent on destroying public transportation in every community across this province.

Let me tell you something: The people of Welland-Thorold won't tolerate these attacks of today, of yesterday or of the day before. The people of Welland-Thorold, and I'm convinced the people across this province, are going to put an end to the violence because they're going to resist with as much effort and as much strength as this government has been attacking them and their institutions with.

Public transit is important to the people of Ontario; it's important to the people of Welland. This government has no regard for public transit and is intent on destroying —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

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### DR M.S. HAWKINS SENIOR PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** On Saturday, January 11, the Minister of Education and Training and I had the honour of attending a centennial celebration at the Dr M.S. Hawkins Senior Public School in Port Hope, which was chaired by the principal, Ms M. Cameron.

The school honoured the occasion with an excellent dramatic production conceived and directed by special education teacher John Hayden. The production was supported by the community with donations of time, talent and materials. It was a fitting tribute to the school's longevity and to the school's graduates. These include Port Hope's current mayor, Ron Smith; CBC reporter Susan Reisler; and Durham region medical officer of health Dr Robert Kyle.

Indeed, when the first flickering lamp of learning began shining at Dr Hawkins exactly 100 years ago, it could scarcely have been imagined what a success the school and many of its graduates would be. That flame has only grown brighter over the years. It is my sincere hope that the beacon of learning that is Dr M.S. Hawkins school will continue to illuminate the lives of Port Hope students for generations to come.

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville):** I have one question to the government: When is a tax cut not a tax cut? Even your friends in the Canadian Taxpayers Federation today said that you're dumping on to residential property taxpayers in this province a burden of services that the property tax base cannot afford. Ambulance services: Dump it. Public health: Dump it. Assistance to the poor: Dump it. Child care: Dump it. Public transit: Dump it. Health care for seniors: Dump it.

The Canadian Taxpayers Federation, your friends, are upset with your government because they know you're playing a shell game with property taxpayers. They know, as Duncan Sinclair, the head of the restructuring commission, says, that your dumping plan is stupid. Those are his words.



The Harris dump on residential property taxpayers right across Ontario will come back to haunt you, because what you're doing is passing costs on to the people of this province and on to residential property taxes that the property tax base can't pay for. You're raising taxes. A government that said it would cut taxes is shifting the burden. You will not cut property taxes; you'll raise them. Property taxpayers in every community in this province are going to get a big bill, and you're going to get a big rejection in 1999.

#### SEWAGE AND STORMWATER TUNNEL

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** It's actually with some sadness, and some anger as well, that I rise today to inform the House about a decision of the federal Liberal government which compounds a mistake made by this provincial Tory government with respect to a project in the city of Toronto which is commonly called the western beaches tunnel.

Although there's been no public announcement yet — and I'm sure at some point there will be a sign and a sod-turning and all sorts of celebratory goings-on by members of the provincial and federal governments — I have been informed by sources within the federal government that the federal Liberals have now approved this western beaches tunnel to proceed under the Canada-Ontario infrastructure works program despite overwhelming and clear community opposition.

The first phase of this tunnel, which is going to be a waste of \$60 million of taxpayers' money, is going to take combined sewer overflow and sludge and bring it to as far as Strachan Avenue and dump it out into Ontario Place, jeopardizing that whole area.

I have said from day one that I support absolutely the need to clean up the western beaches, and there are environmentally friendly and less costly ways to do that.

But the eventuality of this project to bring all of that sludge to Ashbridges Bay sewage treatment plant absolutely jeopardizes the environmental assessment in which we say no to incineration. I only wish the provincial and federal governments agreed.

#### RAMADAN

**Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West):** It is with pleasure that I rise in the House today on behalf of the government of Ontario to call to the attention of all members that Friday, January 10, marked the beginning of the annual Muslim fasting period of Ramadan.

Lasting for several weeks, Ramadan is a very spiritual time for the world's more than 500 million Muslims. Together with the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, Muslims take the opportunity during Ramadan to retreat to the desert to struggle against sin and experience the calming, transforming power of prayer and fasting. Muslims fast until sundown, pray five times a day facing Mecca and drink to the fullest possible measure from the spiritual fountain of the Koran.

What I have always found most inspiring about the Muslim religion is its use of the prayer beads, something which we Irish also do. The Muslim tasbeeh contains 99 names of God. At the end, it is said that the 100th name

is unknown to all but Allah, but Allah will reveal it to His servant.

I wish all Muslims, especially members of the Muslim community of Ontario, the kind of rich spiritual experience during this holy month of Ramadan so as to, at the end of it, hear that 100th name in their minds and hearts, just as the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, did centuries ago. Salaam Alekum.

#### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

##### REGULATORY OFFENCES

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** It will be my pleasure later today to introduce in the Legislature a bill to amend the Provincial Offences Act which will eliminate waste and duplication and will consolidate the administration of provincial offences, primarily ticketing offences, at one level of government.

As my colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing said on Monday, one of the goals of this government is to ensure the best service delivery by reducing waste, duplication and the overall cost to the same taxpayer, who pays the bill.

We know from the province's experience three years ago in transferring parking tickets to municipalities that there are a number of benefits to be gained by involving local communities more directly in the justice system. Ninety-five per cent of parking tickets are now being handled by municipalities. This has resulted in a more efficient and cost-effective system. We are expanding on this proven initiative by transferring to the municipal sector administrative and limited prosecutorial responsibilities for minor regulatory offences and the associated revenue.

As David Crombie noted in his letter of endorsement for this initiative, we have worked closely with the municipal sector on the transferring of responsibilities and have been pleased by their keen participation in this project to date. We look forward to building on this mutually beneficial relationship as we create the provincial-municipal partnerships necessary to provide a smooth transition over the next two years.

##### SEWAGE AND WATER TREATMENT

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** Later today I will introduce for first reading the Water and Sewage Services Improvement Act. Through this legislation we will be transferring ownership of provincially owned water and sewage treatment plants to municipalities. Municipalities already own 75% of water and sewage works in this province. We are turning over the remaining 25% in full confidence that they are best qualified to provide first-class service to their communities.

The amended legislation will also formalize municipal responsibility for septic system inspections and approval as of October 1, 1997. Direct service will be designated



to the municipalities, as they have the ability to provide one-stop approvals for service to their taxpayers. We are restructuring these services to improve the way they are delivered so that the taxpayer receives value: the best possible service with optimal efficiency and least cost.

The quality of our water is not negotiable. When we turn on taps, we expect clear, drinkable and safe water. As Minister of Environment and Energy, I am committed to ensuring that Ontario's high standards of environmental protection are maintained and, wherever possible, improved upon.

Clarifying the roles of provincial and municipal governments in water and sewage services will result in increased accountability and a better deal for the taxpayer.

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### PUBLIC LIBRARIES

**Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation):** I am pleased to announce this afternoon that I will be introducing the Local Control of Public Libraries Act, 1997. Ontario's libraries have served the province very well over the last 100 years. The new library framework, comprised of changes to the Public Libraries Act and new regulation under the Municipal Act, guarantees free access to libraries, free use of materials in libraries, free borrowing of printed materials by residents and free borrowing of special-format materials for residents with disabilities.

As my colleague Minister Leach stated on Monday, our goal is to eliminate duplication of municipal-provincial services, to reduce costs and to remove barriers. These were also the goals of the Who Does What panel which Mr Crombie chaired. I am very pleased that the Local Control of Public Libraries Act achieves these goals. Under the new act, municipalities will have full authority to provide and effectively manage library services. This will both improve the delivery of library services to the people of Ontario and lower the cost of this service, because local officials know what is best for their communities.

The province will continue to support the library system through partnerships, policy and funding of the province-wide network of shared resources, cooperative services and telecommunications links that connect Ontario's public libraries to each other and to global information networks.

We want to ensure that our libraries continue to evolve and to maintain their position at the forefront of the information revolution. Our libraries play an indispensable role in the education of people of all ages and abilities, and they make a significant contribution to the well-educated workforce, which is one of Ontario's greatest economic strengths. This act will strengthen and safeguard our library system and will help ensure that Ontario's libraries continue to play a central role in the lives of Ontarians.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** It's going to cripple them, Marilyn. Get with it. Smarten up. What a dumb and stupid thing to say.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I would ask you to ask the

member for Welland-Thorold to withdraw his comment about the minister's statement and the minister.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Mississauga South, I need to know what it is you're asking the member to withdraw. Since I didn't hear it — it's got to be on the record.

**Mrs Marland:** I don't believe the derogatory term "dumb" is parliamentary language.

**The Speaker:** I didn't hear how he used it or the context etc. I will give the member for Welland-Thorold an opportunity, if he wants to withdraw "dumb."

**Mr Kormos:** I withdraw, and I maintain "stupid."

**The Speaker:** Ministry statements?

### PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I rise today to tell the House how the government is eliminating duplication —

**Interjection:** I like the suit, Al — a three-piece suit.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Okay, the wardrobe jokes are finished. Minister of Transportation.

**Hon Mr Palladini:** I rise today to tell the House how the government is eliminating duplication in the delivery of local transportation services. As a result, taxpayers will get better services at lower costs.

By this time next year, municipalities will fully fund municipal transit and municipal airports. They will also be responsible for GO Transit and those highways and ferries that clearly serve a local need. These changes will give municipalities more freedom to manage, fund and coordinate local transportation services. From now on, municipalities will be able to deliver local transportation services without the interference of the province and without having to seek our permission.

I want to assure the people who use these services that these changes will take place in an orderly fashion. We are giving municipalities ample time to prepare for these changes, and the province will continue to fund our current commitments, such as the TTC five-year capital plan and the Sheppard subway.

The province will maintain the provincial highway network, highways in sparsely populated areas and remote airports in northern Ontario. We have also asked Milt Farrow to include GO Transit as part of his broader review of a Greater Toronto Services Board. In his review he will give full consideration to the importance of cross-town boundary GO service. This change in responsibility is part of our plan to take education off the property tax. This in turn will provide better services at a lower cost to taxpayers.

We are confident that this will make it easier for local governments to serve the needs of their community. Finally the citizens of Ontario will know who moves what.

**The Speaker:** Responses? Leader of the official opposition.

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr Speaker, I'm sure you've had the opportunity — we all have — to observe a skilled magician at work. You'll notice that with one hand he'll make broad, sweeping,



grandiose gestures. The purpose of that, of course, is to divert our attention from what the other hand is doing, and we all know how important it is to keep our eye on that other hand.

Let me tell you about Mike the Magician. With one hand he's making sweeping change in terms of who's going to pay for things now in Ontario. He's making a grand switch.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I appreciate the fact that the ministry statements are over, but it's now time for responses, and the government side, if you would come to order, it makes it easier to hear. Leader of the official opposition.

**Mr McGuinty:** Mike the Magician is making a grand switch. He's going to trade education; the province of Ontario is now going to assume complete responsibility for funding education. On the other hand, he's going to deliver to municipalities the responsibility for health care and ambulances, welfare, public housing, day care, public transit and a host of other responsibilities.

The hand that's doing the switching is moving very quickly. In fact we are here today, in an unprecedented fashion at this time of the year, to deal with these matters and we cannot possibly do them justice, given the breadth of the change that's being imposed upon the people of this province by the bills that are being introduced this week.

To divert us further from what's really going on, we've got some background music. We've got close to \$3 million in an advertising campaign to lull us. The purpose of that propaganda is to lull us into believing that all is well in Ontario and that things are only going to get better.

We've all seen Mike Harris on TV beckoning us to come with him into the future. I know where he's going, I don't want to go there with him and I don't believe the people of this province want to go there either.

Let's take a look at the other hand, because Ontarians know about the other hand, and that's the one we've got to watch. Do you know what that hand is doing? It's quietly hiking our property taxes. It's not cutting them, it's hiking them. Mike the Taxfighter has become Mike the Taxhider. He's hiding the fact that during the last recession welfare costs skyrocketed. They went up in this province by close to \$1 billion. He's hiding the fact that property taxpayers are now going to have to pick up that tab when the next recession comes, and it surely will.

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He's also hiding the fact that the number of seniors in Ontario is growing dramatically and their special health needs are going to mean, in the future, more taxes for property taxpayers. He's trying to hide the fact that the huge pent-up demand for day care, a demand that has gone unsatisfied to date, is going to mean more taxes for property taxpayers.

But we're not losing sight of what Mike the Magician is up to: He's hiking our property taxes, and of course he's telling us it's just a simple swap. That's kind of like you and I, Mr Speaker, saying we'll switch cars: You've got a 1997 model, I've got a 1982 model, and we'll call it quits. Well, guess who's saddled with the higher costs down the road?

Mike the Magician is trying to trick us into believing that what he's doing this week and what he started to do a number of weeks ago with Metro Toronto is a good thing for us and is going to make life better for all of us, but we can see through the smoke and the mirrors and the advertising campaign. Mike is dumping on us. That's what this is really all about. He's dumping on us. He's dumping long-term care, he's dumping libraries, he's dumping public housing, he's dumping public transit, he's dumping welfare, he's dumping day care, he's dumping public health on to our cities and our towns. He's dumping high-risk responsibilities on to our cities and towns. That's what this is all about. He's dumping property taxes on Ontarians. He's dumping all over this province, and that's not a pretty sight.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville):** This is about property tax increases, the death of public transit in Ontario, and it's about the death of a province that we've come to know and love.

Property taxpayers in this province, get ready. You're going to be faced with mega increases in your property taxes. Seniors who are on fixed incomes and paying their property taxes, those taxes are going up. Your services in schools are being cut. This is a smokescreen. Instead of declaring war on illiteracy, they declare war on students. That's wrong, it's bad public policy, and the people of this province can see through it.

Today the Minister of Transportation has signalled the death of public transit. Those of you in this province, in Metro particularly and other urban areas, if you still have a transit system in a year's time your fares are going to increase dramatically, because there's not a system in this province that's made money. The reason we've subsidized is because —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, member for Windsor-Walkerville. Responses for the third party? Leader of the third party.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** People in Ontario are being subjected to an incredible propaganda campaign. Every night they turn on the television and they hear the Premier of the province using taxpayers' money to tell them, "Don't worry, be happy." It's a very cheap imitation of Ronald Reagan. We all remember Ronald Reagan saying to Americans: "Don't worry, be happy. Don't worry as your cities crumble around you. Don't worry as I cut health care. Don't worry as I cut libraries. Don't worry as I cut the most important social supports in your community." We see it again today.

There used to be some recognition on the part of Conservatives in this province that in order to have a productive society it was important to have good transportation infrastructure. There was a recognition that you needed to have good transportation infrastructure for goods and for people if you were going to be a productive society and a productive economy. The message we're getting today is that transportation infrastructure isn't important. What the government is saying is that there is no money for transportation; that's really what the government is saying.

There used to be a recognition by the Conservative Party in this province that it was important to have a literate population. It was important to encourage people



to read. It was important that even small municipalities have a library where people could go and pick up good-quality books and people would be encouraged to read.

What is the message here today from this government? That it's not important to have a literate society any more; it's not important to encourage literacy; it's not important to provide money so that even the smallest communities can have a public library.

There used to be a recognition on the part even of Conservatives in this province that there was a very important provincial interest in having safe, clean drinking water. There used to be a recognition on the part of Conservatives in this province that it was very important to have good-quality sewage treatment systems so that we would not pollute our drinking water and we would not pollute our environment.

The message from this government today is that there is no money to ensure safe, clean drinking water. There is no money to ensure that we have good sewage systems and good sewage treatment systems, so that we don't pollute our drinking water and we don't pollute our environment.

Speaker, I will say it again: Put yourself in the position of municipal councils. Here they are, they've been handed some of the most expensive parts of the health care system now. We know the cost of long-term care is going to go up, the cost of home care is going to go up, especially as this government goes about closing 40 hospitals. We know the cost of ambulance services is going to go up. We know the cost of public health is going to go up, especially if there's not any money to ensure safe, clean drinking water any more and there's not any money to ensure proper sewage disposal any more.

Then, on top of that, municipalities are being told, "You take over the cost of policing." It's as if policing is not a provincial responsibility any more. You simply throw policing out there and if you're a wealthy community you get good policing; if you're not a wealthy community you do without policing.

Now municipalities are being told there's no money for transportation, for moving goods and people to where we need them in order to have a productive economy; there is no money for safe, clean drinking water; there is no money for sewage treatment; and there is no money for literacy. There's not even money to ensure public libraries, where kids can go and learn and read and exercise their reading skills.

This government knows it is putting municipalities in impossible situations, but this government doesn't care. This government believes that all of these things — transportation, libraries, safe, clean drinking water, health care — don't matter. The only thing that matters to this government is finding \$6 billion to give their wealthy friends a tax break.

They don't care if they butcher health care in doing it, they don't care if they butcher public transit in doing it, they don't care if they butcher libraries, if they do away with safe, clean drinking water. This government is prepared to do all that in order to give their wealthy friends that \$6-billion tax break. Take a billion from community services like libraries and safe, clean drinking water, all so you can give your friends this —

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

#### GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** Mr Speaker, on a point of privilege: With the introduction of Bill 103, the very day the bill was introduced in this House on December 17 the Minister of Municipal Affairs issued through his ministry a pamphlet worth hundreds of thousands of dollars door to door in the municipality of Metropolitan Toronto.

He basically used this pamphlet as a propaganda piece for his legislation. It is not an attempt to instruct or advise the citizens; it's pure, blatant propaganda, if you look at it. Even the picture in the pamphlet is a contrived picture — it is not a true picture — of a city street in Toronto. It's a blatant attempt to support their legislation without any attempt to give the other side an objective viewpoint.

I'm wondering if you would rule whether the minister and this government are in contempt of this Legislature, because it is my understanding that there is due process in this Legislature, where bills are debated, changed and may be rejected. I'm asking you to rule whether the unprecedented expenditure of hundreds of thousands of dollars on this propaganda, before a bill is even debated for one minute, is proper, and if it is not, whether it is in contempt of the Legislature.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Mr Speaker, on a point of privilege: I will not prolong this except to say that this is certainly an extension of and relates to the point of privilege I raised yesterday in which I suggested that you look very carefully at the government's attempt to advertise, using public funds, in advance of the passage of legislation that is before the House, and whether or not, considering the precedents in the House of Commons and here in this Legislative Assembly, this may in fact harm the privileges of all members of the assembly and perhaps even constitute a contempt of Parliament.

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I ask that in consideration of the point I raised yesterday with regard to government advertising, paid for with taxpayers' money — whether the matter raised by the honourable member with regard to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing's pamphlet, which apparently was funded by his ministry, is part of a similar campaign which in fact shows contempt for the democratic process in this assembly.

As was indicated yesterday, we are not an executive democracy. We are not an administrative democracy. If we are indeed a democracy where debate about legislation matters, where hearings by the Legislative Assembly matter, where the public can come forward with views and have their views listened to, which may then lead to change in legislation, where perhaps even if the public has the opportunity to exercise their rights to vote —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Algoma, thank you. Just to the point of privilege I believe the member for Oakwood raised, I'm assuming that this is not a householder, and I think I'm assuming correctly —

**Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside):** It's not a householder.



**The Speaker:** Okay. Then I will take this also under advisement and put it with the two points of privilege that were raised yesterday from St Catharines and Algoma and I will report back as soon as I can.

#### SPEAKER'S RULING

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** Point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I've got one behind you, actually. Member for Dovercourt.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** Mine is on a different point. I don't know if —

**Mr Kennedy:** Mine is as well.

**Mr Silipo:** Mr Speaker, I'd like to raise a point of order on the events that transpired yesterday afternoon. I went back and looked at Hansard. I didn't go back to review the tape, but I did look at Hansard. I believe that for what seems to me to be, I assume, simple error or simple inadvertence, in what you did yesterday there was a breach of the process.

You will recall that it was my contention yesterday that in fact I did not stand up at the point in time to be recognized because I thought you were still dealing with the member for Oakwood, who was introducing a bill. We were in introduction of bills at the time. In looking back at Hansard, it's clear to me that you at no time ruled his attempt to introduce a bill out of order, and therefore, by not doing that, you were not able to proceed beyond that.

Hansard I think proves that in saying that all you simply stated at the time was, "You've got to bring the bill down and then you get a chance — this is very unusual, actually." Then you go on to say, "Introduction of bills. Orders of the day," and on and on from there. Then follows after that the exchange that you and I had in my attempts to understand your ruling on this. So at no time, Speaker, did you rule the attempt by the member for Oakwood to introduce a bill to be out of order.

It's my contention to you, Speaker, that given that you did not rule his attempt to do that out of order, in fact the actions that followed that particular point in time, which as you recall have a particular importance in terms of the government then having been able to proceed and to call orders of the day and to introduce for second reading Bill 103 — it's my contention and my request to you, Speaker, that you take a look at this situation, pause the proceedings of the day, if you need to, to do that. Because obviously, given that if you let things stand, we will now be, having had one day's session on second reading — I feel the events that transpired are such that, given that you did not rule out of order the member who was recognized to introduce a bill, if there was something that needed to be worked out in terms of the process, I think that is something that could have been straightened out.

I know I had seen the bill. From my understanding, the bill was in proper format. I appreciate that when the member stood up to introduce the bill, he did not say, as I guess is the practice, "I move that leave be given to introduce bill such-and-such," but that again, Speaker, is something we have traditionally corrected by the member simply being told what it is he is supposed to say on introducing a bill.

But my essential point is this: You did not rule the member for Oakwood out of order at that point and therefore I think it was improper for you to go from that point on to the following items. Given that, if you agree with me upon reflection that in fact what happened yesterday was in contravention of the rules, then I think your only recourse would be to rule all of the subsequent events to that point in time out of order. I would make that request of you, Speaker, and I would ask that you take some time to reflect on that, if necessary.

**The Speaker:** To the member for Dovercourt: I thought this may come up today so I took the time to review the Hansard and the videotape of what transpired yesterday. You're correct. At no time did I say to the member for Oakwood, "Your bill is out of order," and I think I mentioned in there I wasn't sure if I had or I hadn't. But the fact remains that is not unusual either. It's not unusual, if a member has brought a bill to this House that isn't in order, for the Speaker to in fact say: "Your bill is out of order. We're moving on." That's not an unusual circumstance at all. It's happened in the past. Again those are the situations that we can bring to your attention and show you.

Having reviewed the video, and I think if you review Hansard it's very clear in Hansard that I, the Speaker, said "Introduction of bills," and then it goes to "Orders of the day." It's not nearly as formal, as you could see in the video. The video I reviewed carefully and I said, "Introduction of bills," and I looked about the House, not just once but looked a couple of times, seeking anybody to stand in their place and introduce a bill.

The member for Cochrane South, I see you questioning with a tape in your hand. I'm not sure what the tape is, but I reviewed the tape of yesterday's events and that's in fact what I did. I looked around and I looked down to the table to see if in fact there was somebody I was missing here.

I appreciate your point of order and I understand that in your mind there was some confusion about what was taking place, but with due respect to what you believe transpired, in viewing it again, I couldn't have been any clearer when I said, "Introduction of bills," and I paused for what I consider to be a considerable length of time for anyone to have the opportunity to stand, because with due respect I understood what was taking place yesterday. I wasn't trying to usurp the process and I tried to give the opportunity for someone to stand. When they didn't, I went to orders of the day.

So I appreciate your point of order. I don't believe it's in order. I believe what took place yesterday was in fact in order.

**Mr Kennedy:** Mr Speaker, just to correct the record for yesterday, to make sure the House wasn't inadvertently misled, there was a statement I made about long-term care and the funding mechanism for it in terms of pooling taxes, and the minister responded saying it wasn't a pooling of taxes, but in fact we've learned this morning that it is and the minister may wish to correct that.

**The Speaker:** With due respect to the member for York South, you can correct your record; you can't correct someone else's record.



## ACCESS TO LEGISLATIVE BUILDING

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Mr Speaker, on a point of privilege: At 12 noon today the member for Sault Ste Marie and I attended and participated in a service of commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr in front of the Legislative Assembly. Among the people there were people who have identified themselves for some time now as members of the interfaith community, who, as you undoubtedly know have been here regularly on Wednesdays conducting vigils.

I should tell you that as we left the north door to travel to the front of the building, we observed what I colloquially call the police paddy wagon parked there, along with other police vehicles, along with mounted police officers and numerous uniformed and, of course, armed Metro police officers; I'm not quarrelling with the fact that the police officers are armed.

I was concerned there would be that police presence for what was an interfaith service in celebration of pacifist and human rights leader Martin Luther King. However, I was advised that two of the participants in that service were Reverend Brian Burch and Matthew Behrens. Both of these people advised me, as they advised the community that were participating in that service in celebration of faith, that they were two of the people who were charged some time ago now with mischief as a result of attempting to sow some seeds on the earth adjacent to the building. They advised as well that the release orders that were imposed on them prohibited them from attending near Queen's Park; I believe not to attend within 500 metres.

This may have explained the police presence, although if two people were there in even alleged violation of a release order, one questions why so many police officers and why a paddy wagon and a van and so many other vehicles were required.

1420

I say this to you, Speaker, and I'm trying to be concise: I was frustrated because I very much wanted to speak with Reverend Burch and Matthew Behrens in my office. I wanted to discuss with them — and I believe it's my responsibility as well as my right to do so with them, as it would be with any other member of the Ontario community. To have invited them into my office, into this building, into Queen's Park, a very public building, the seat of democracy in this province, would have been effectively to aid and abet in the contravention of a judicial release order.

I submit to you, Speaker, that you speak for this Parliament. It is within your power to advise the prosecution in this instance that this sort of restraint order for somebody who has not been convicted and somebody who is charged, not with an offence of violence but with a most modest offence of mischief, where clearly the intention was to exercise the democratic right of expression — of disapproval of this government, so be it. But I submit that it's a breach of my privilege for there to have been imposed upon two Ontarians a legal requirement that suggests that they risk arrest and incarceration should they come to attend at either their own MPP's office or the office of any other member of this Legislative Assembly.

Reverend Burch and Matthew Behrens spoke with the police and it was indicated that they were going to be charged for having participated in an interfaith service here at Queen's Park. Speaker, I submit that it's within your capacity, within your jurisdiction to express clearly that you as Speaker, speaking for this Parliament, do not consider it appropriate that an Ontarian should be barred from attending at or near this very public place and this seat of democracy. I submit to you that that warrants your consideration and quite frankly your action in terms of responding in a positive way and making it clear. I agree you can't control the judiciary, but you can express your view as to the fact that this must remain a very public place if we are to maintain a democracy here.

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker, on the same matter: I was out there today as well and I have to tell you that as a member of this assembly taking the responsibility that was given me when I was elected to this place and recognizing what was going on there and the statement that these folks who took time out of their schedules on this very cold day to come and make the statement that they did and recognizing some of the risk that some of the folks who were there were taking to make that statement, I think calls for you and all of us to revisit the question of what this place is about.

I think you, on a couple of occasions over the last six months to a year, handled situations with some level of understanding and concern and sensitivity, and I would ask of you that you continue down that road, that you continue that approach to upholding the importance of Queen's Park and this place in the public life of Ontario and indicate to those who are in a position to make decisions and have responsibility that everybody is welcome to come and be present and visit with their members and make a statement, regardless of what process they're involved in judicially.

In light of the very great damage that is being done across this province by the government to the poor and the marginalized and those who can't speak for themselves, it's inherent that all of us here do everything within our power to make sure that those who speak for those folks have a chance to —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I appreciate that. I appreciate what you're saying. I'm trying to grasp the privilege that you're addressing here. The two people you're speaking of, were they arrested out front of the Legislature? I don't want to prolong it, so a yes or no would be very helpful.

**Mr Kormos:** I tell you, Speaker, that the police directed them — and I was present when this conversation took place — to attend at the police station tomorrow morning to be arrested as a result of their attendance here.

**The Speaker:** Okay. That's what I needed to know. Thank you very much.

Now, I want to just quickly address the issue. I dealt with this issue, and I dealt with it yesterday. The police within the precinct came to my office and said that this was going to happen. What previously happened was four people, I believe, came to the building — this is before my time — and were planting out front. They were



arrested, taken away, and they were told they couldn't come within a certain distance of the precinct.

I was addressed yesterday by the security people within Queen's Park. They came and said to me that there are plans to have this interfaith group come and pray at Queen's Park and they would be part of this.

My directions to the security people in the building were very simple: "If they are coming here to pray at Queen's Park, leave them alone. I don't think there are going to be any problems; I doubt there are going to be problems. Don't bother them. If there are any problems at all caused by the same four, then obviously the police are going to have to act properly."

Those were the directions that I gave. Those were the directions that I hope were carried out. I will take it under advisement. I am telling you this forthright: At the time, that's what I told them. If those directions weren't carried out, I am upset and offended. I will investigate. But I've got to believe at this point in time the directions I gave yesterday were carried out today, and those were, "If they're coming here to pray, leave them alone."

It's time for oral questions.

**Mr Kormos:** Mr Speaker, may I —

**The Speaker:** Member for Welland-Thorold, can you just sit down for a minute. I am prepared to meet with you afterwards if you have any more information that you'd like to give me. I'd like to move on now.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Finance. I promise to go easy because I understand he was dealt a very severe blow this morning. I understand that the Canadian Taxpayers Federation told you what we in the Liberal caucus have been saying all along. The Canadian Taxpayers Federation this morning said that your dumping of billions of dollars in new costs on to the backs of municipal property taxpayers is nothing but a shell game, a shell game which is going to force municipalities to raise property taxes.

Minister, everybody in Ontario now knows that what you're doing is going to result in people paying higher property taxes. Why don't you admit it?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** To the leader of the official opposition: Because it simply is not true. We have removed \$5.4 billion in today's dollars from the property tax backs of taxpayers in Ontario. We have also committed this government to providing another \$1 billion a year on an annualized basis to community reinvestment. The municipalities in this province will be getting from this government \$1 billion. They'll have access to, directly, \$5.4 billion a year in today's dollars.

I might remind the leader of the official opposition that with respect to the education component and property taxes, student enrolment between 1985 and 1995 went up 16%; education costs went up 84%, and the property taxpayer —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The Minister of Finance, thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr McGuinty:** The finance minister would have us believe that this is going to be a fair swap. Well, no, it's not. You know it, I know it and the Canadian Taxpayers Federation knows it. I am sure the Minister of Finance wouldn't just pull numbers out of the air. The Minister of Finance wouldn't just make up a number like 10% if he didn't have the studies to prove it. He tells us the property tax is going to drop somewhere in the neighbourhood of 10%. I know you wouldn't make that up so, Minister, I want you to produce any studies you've got that conclusively show that property taxes are going to go down. If you don't have those, will you quit trying to fool the people of Ontario with your misinformation? Every expert, including —

**The Speaker:** Order. You can't accuse the Minister of Finance of disseminating misinformation. We went over that a little while ago. You must withdraw.

**Mr McGuinty:** I withdraw that, Mr Speaker.

Will you quit trying to fool the people of Ontario? Every expert, including the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, tells us that property taxes are going up.

1430

**Hon Mr Eves:** It is not inaccurate information. It's fairly easily accessible information. The numbers for what the province is spending this year in every one of those areas for which municipalities are being asked to assume responsibility are there in black and white in this year's budget figures for everybody to read and understand. When you add those up and when you see the tax room we have left municipalities, they will in today's dollars at worst be a wash and by the year 2000 should have room available to reduce property taxes in this province by as much as 10%; in fact, in some municipalities starting in 1998 they'll have more room than that.

**Mr McGuinty:** What that means is that there are no studies, so at best it's hopeful speculation. That's all we've got here.

I want to talk to you about property tax increases to businesses. That's something we haven't talked about much lately. Businesses, in particular small businesses, are going to be forced to pay as a result of your dumping of billions of dollars on the property taxes.

The minister will know that business is still going to be paying property taxes for education. That hasn't changed. But now, on top of that, business will also be forced to pay through property tax for welfare, seniors health care, child care, social housing. That adds up to a big property tax increase for small business. Can you tell us how many jobs will be lost as a result of your new property tax increase and exactly how much commercial property taxes are going to have to increase to pay for your dumping?

**Hon Mr Eves:** The leader of the official opposition will have to wait until tomorrow, when he knows I will be making a statement in this House with respect to property tax assessment in the province of Ontario. He will see tomorrow afternoon that we will take care of the small business commercial community in the province because of exactly the problems that their government



and his government created for small business owners across the province.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr McGuinty:** More good news to come, Mr Speaker. We can hardly wait.

My second question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I've got to hand it to you. Your government's decision to spend \$2 million on the advertising campaign to fool the people with your smokescreen of chaos almost worked, but not quite. People are now starting to understand that all your announcements this week add up to is higher property taxes and more cuts.

Nowhere is this more clear than in Metropolitan Toronto. After this morning's announcement, the property taxpayers in Metro now have \$600 million in new costs dumped on them. That's a net increase of \$600 million. This is hardly a 50-50 swap.

Minister, can you tell me how much you expect property taxes to increase in Metro Toronto as a result of your decision to dump 600 million new tax dollars in costs on to them?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** To the Leader of the Opposition, as my colleague the Treasurer just pointed out, we're relieving the municipalities of \$5.4 billion in education costs. In exchange for that, we're transferring responsibilities for programs that the municipalities are best equipped to deliver: transit, roads, and sharing welfare, with its declining rolls. Rather than taxes increasing in Metropolitan Toronto, I'm quite confident —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** The member for Sudbury and the member for Algoma, please come to order. Minister.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I'm quite confident, as is my colleague the Treasurer, that property taxes in municipalities throughout Ontario will have the ability to go down, not up.

**Mr McGuinty:** The minister doesn't get it. As of today, Metro Toronto property taxpayers are burdened with an additional \$600 million in new costs. Minister, the announcements this week add up to an attack on Toronto. The dumping of welfare hits Toronto the hardest. This morning, the Minister of Transportation couldn't guarantee that the TTC wouldn't be forced to increase their fares, and the finance minister revealed that half of Toronto's property taxpayers could expect their property taxes to increase as a result of tomorrow's announcement. Half of the property taxpayers in Toronto are going to experience increases.

Minister, when you add this on top of your own contempt for the democratic wishes of the people of Metro Toronto with your heavy-handed approach to the megacity, you get a recipe for disaster.

What have you got against the people of Metropolitan Toronto?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I have the greatest of respect for everybody who lives in Metropolitan Toronto. It's probably the greatest city in the world and we have an opportunity now to make it even greater by eliminating the duplication and the waste, eliminating six planning departments and creating one; eliminating six fire departments and creating one. We have an opportunity to take

the greatest city in the world and make it even greater, and the plans we are bringing forward will ensure that happens.

**Mr McGuinty:** Over the past year I have had the opportunity to travel the province extensively, and I can tell you that people across the province may like to poke a little fun at Toronto from time to time, but believe me, they'd put Toronto up against any other big city anywhere else on this planet. People from Ottawa to Kenora to Cornwall to Kincardine understand how important it is that Toronto does well, yet nobody got hit harder with this week's announcement than the people in Toronto. Your decision to dump hundreds of millions of dollars on the property taxpayers in Metro threatens to create American-style ghettos in our largest city. Metro won't be able to cope, Minister. I don't think you understand that.

Is finding the money to pay for your irresponsible tax cut really worth risking what the world has come to know as the largest successful urban environment in the world?

**Hon Mr Leach:** The Leader of the Opposition has mentioned \$600 million on several occasions, and I have no idea where that number comes from. But what I do know is that we're taking a program, education, \$5.4 billion, off the property tax, and most of it comes from Metropolitan Toronto. Welfare, where we're sharing the cost with municipalities, has been declining over the last several years and everyone agrees that it will probably continue to decline. If you're taking a program off that is increasing and giving them one that's declining, I fail to see how they're going to have additional costs.

1440

**The Speaker:** New question. Leader of the third party.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I want to address a question to the minister responsible for municipal affairs as well, because when we contacted the government of Metropolitan Toronto they had real problems with your message of, "Don't worry, be happy." When we contacted Metropolitan Toronto and asked them for their numbers, they said that when you add up the costs of home care, when you add up the costs of ambulance services, when you add up the costs of public health, when you add up the costs of long-term care, when you add up the costs of child care, child welfare, family benefits, hostels, social and non-profit housing, when you add all those up, they said that at the very least it will amount to a \$220-million increase for them.

That's without factoring in what you just did today to highways and transportation and what you've done to libraries. They say that the \$220 million additional on the property tax means an 18% increase in property taxes. Minister, I put it to you: Will you now admit that your Toronto megacity amounts to mega-taxes?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I like the NDP's numbers at least better than the Liberal's; we saved \$400 million there in about 30 seconds.

By introducing a single city in Metropolitan Toronto, there will be substantial savings just in the elimination of duplication and waste that's there at the present time.

**Mr Hampton:** Minister, tomorrow we'll add in the costs of transportation and we'll add in the other costs you've dumped on to municipalities and the number will



grow. But it's not just Metro Toronto; we also talked to Thunder Bay. In Thunder Bay they calculate the additional cost of your downloading as a result of yesterday to be more than \$500,000, and that's without counting in provincial roads, without counting in ambulance services, without counting in public transit or non-profit housing. They know they can expect a big hit in Thunder Bay.

In Haliburton county the deputy reeve there said that as a result of the costs of policing, property taxes will likely go up by 20%. Many municipalities elsewhere are making the same tally.

Minister, will you now admit that if municipalities are going to cover the cost of health care, policing, child care, social assistance, roads and transportation, non-profit housing, libraries, and sewer and water, their property taxes are going to go up? Will you now admit that?

**Hon Mr Leach:** We totally disagree with the premise being put forward by the leader of the third party. We're taking about \$6 billion worth of services away from municipalities and we're transferring back about \$6 billion worth of responsibilities.

Will every municipality come out equally? No doubt they will not. That's why we've set up a \$1-billion restructuring fund to ensure that any municipality that needs assistance during the transition period will be able to draw on that fund.

Is it going to be a complete, total wash for every municipality in the province? Nobody ever said it was. We recognize that. But we also recognize that we've set up the mechanism to assist municipalities through that transition period over the next three or four years. At the end of that three or four years, we're quite confident the municipalities will have the ability to lower property taxes.

**Mr Hampton:** They heard your message. They hear the Premier on television, thanks to your \$2-million ad campaign, saying to everyone, "Don't worry, be happy," but they know that the costs of long-term care are rising as the population gets older. They know, as you close hospitals and people can't go to the hospital to get their health care services any longer, that the cost of home care will go up. They know that the cost of ambulance services is going up. They know that the cost of public health is going up. They know there's no money for sewer and water, there's no money for roads and transportation, there's no money for policing. They know these are all going to go up as costs.

These municipalities — Metro Toronto, Thunder Bay — have made available their numbers. Since you're telling everyone, "Don't worry, be happy," will you make available today your numbers that show what the impact will be in terms of taxes for Metro Toronto, your numbers for Thunder Bay, your numbers for other municipalities around the province? Give us the numbers. You're spending \$2 million telling people, "Don't worry, be happy." Give us the numbers.

**Hon Mr Leach:** It doesn't take a whole lot of thought, if you're going to take between 60% and 70% off the municipal property tax by the province absorbing the cost of education, that there's a wide window there for municipalities to assume the cost of services that are best

delivered by the municipalities. The municipalities want it. Your government went through this same exercise of disentanglement. The disentanglement exercise was actually started by the NDP, and I give them credit for that. They were on the right track; they just didn't have the ability to pull it off.

Municipalities are looking forward to being responsible for delivering the number of programs they're going to be asked to deliver. They'll have total control over the delivery of roads, and there will be efficiencies in doing that. There will be total control over the delivery of a lot of services, and they'll be far better off in the long term.

## HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My next question is for the Chair of Management Board and Minister of Health. I just want to say to the municipal affairs minister: I asked you a simple question. You're spending \$2 million telling people to be happy. If they're going to be happy, give them the numbers. So let's ask the Minister of Health for some numbers.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. I appreciate the fact that some of the members on the government side — he's addressed his question. How he spends his time asking it is the decision of the leader.

**Mr Hampton:** Let's ask the Minister of Health for some numbers. Minister, you keep saying that \$17.4 million is what you're spending on health —

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** Billion.

**Mr Hampton:** — \$17.4 billion is what you're spending on health and what you're going to continue to spend on health. When we add up the numbers from yesterday in terms of long-term care, home care, ambulance services, public health, we find you've cut \$1.5 billion from the Ministry of Health budget and you've pushed it down on to municipalities. I want to ask you, what does \$17.4 billion mean now? Are you still committed to \$17.4 billion or are you spending \$1.5 billion less on health care? Which is it?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** Just to correct two small points, this year, as has already been corrected, it's billions of dollars we're talking about. Second, it's \$17.7 billion that the province of Ontario will be spending this year.

This government, before the election, during the election and after the election, made a commitment to a funding level of at least \$17.4 billion. This government will live up to that commitment this fiscal year and on into the future.

**Mr Hampton:** This is important because the Minister of Community and Social Services used the \$17.4-billion figure yesterday. Then you proceeded yesterday to push \$1.5 billion in health care costs down on to municipalities, health care costs that municipalities know are going to grow. As you close hospitals, as the population gets older, those health care costs are going to grow astronomically.



1450

I want to ask the minister, does that \$17.4 billion that's going to be spent on health care include the \$1.5 billion that you're forcing down on to municipalities? Is that \$17.4 billion in provincial dollars alone, or does the \$17.4 billion include the \$1.5 billion that you've forced down on to municipalities and are going to take from them?

**Hon David Johnson:** What the leader of the third party is missing, I think, in this issue is the fact that this government has been reinvesting in health care in the province. This government has made commitments to reinvest \$170 million in long-term care and home care in Ontario. This government is reinvesting in mental health, in breast cancer, in cardiac services and dialysis. This government has made a commitment to reinvest in hospital restructuring, and there will be a good deal of money involved in reinvesting in hospital restructuring in the province.

I would ask the member opposite to watch the estimates as they unfold in the province over the next several months, over the next several years. You will see at least \$17.4 billion in health care spending in Ontario.

**Mr Hampton:** The only thing I'm missing around here is an answer. That's the only thing I'm missing.

I'll tell you what municipalities are concerned about. You brag about spending \$17.4 billion on health care, but the fact is that you've pushed at least \$1.5 billion of that down on to municipalities. Either it's a \$1.5-billion health care cut or what you're in effect doing is taking \$1.5 billion away from municipal taxpayers and trying to engage in a phoney game of double counting.

I put it to you again. I want an answer. When you list the \$17.4 billion in spending on health care, are you including the \$1.5 billion that you're forcing down on to municipalities? Are you including it, yes or no?

**Hon David Johnson:** The leader of the third party can't take yes for an answer. The budget of the province of Ontario will continue to be at least \$17.4 billion. We made that commitment before the election; that is a commitment we'll continue to live with and that we are proud of, because we have put health care services first, the number one priority. Watch the budget of the province in future years; there will be at least \$17.4 billion. That's our number one priority.

#### GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** My question is to the Minister of Finance. You were a key member of a vigilant Conservative opposition that severely criticized the previous NDP government for what you said was the spending of tax dollars on partisan government advertising. You're now a member of a government which claims to pinch pennies, to be extremely frugal in its practices and determined to eliminate all unnecessary government expenditures. When you have the same access to the news media as those opposed to your policies and dozens of public relations people in your government to help you craft your message, how can you justify spending over \$2 million on self-serving, obviously partisan Conservative propaganda totally at the expense of the taxpayers of Ontario?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** This government has spent less money on advertising than the previous two administrations and we will continue to spend less money than our predecessors on advertising campaigns. I would like to point out to the member for St Catharines that the previous administration from April 1995 to July 1995 spent over \$8 million in direct ad campaigns in three months' time, and by the end of this fiscal year he will see that we will not exceed the number for an entire year that they spent in three months on advertising.

**Mr Bradley:** There's another interesting aspect to this, and that is the fact that you appear to have tried to cloud the issue for the public of Ontario by announcing that the Conservative Party was paying for some ads, as though the public would believe that all the ads out there now are going to be paid for by the Conservative Party.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health are all going to spend \$650,000 on self-serving government propaganda. Many of these are with a company called Gingko. Could it be that the Conservative Party got a better deal on the ads that it put forward to the public of Ontario in the knowledge that there would be a lot more business coming from the government of Ontario through the taxpayers, fully paid for by the taxpayers?

**Hon Mr Eves:** I would like to give the member a very direct answer to that question: It is my understanding that the ads that were paid for by the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario total approximately \$800,000. That was done, I might say, by a company called Hometown Creative Ltd. It is also my understanding that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs has an advertising campaign, paid for by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, whose total buy is approximately \$650,000, done by a company named Gingko. I want to be totally direct with him. They are affiliated companies, but they are two separate advertising campaigns, two separate productions and two separate bills. I know that the opposition will find it difficult that they get a straight and direct answer to a question that's asked.

#### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I'd like to take the opportunity to introduce, in the opposition members' gallery, the ex-member for Sarnia, Mr Bob Huget. Welcome.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. For a government that likes to pride itself on keeping your promises, I heard some interesting points last night by one of your fellow travellers, Joyce Trimmer, about how your megacity scheme is a complete contradiction of a promise you made. She reminded us, a group of some 350 citizens of North York at a meeting last night, about how, together with you and Mr Shea, and supported by Mr Johnson, now Minister of Health, you coauthored a report in 1995 which talked about the elimination of Metro and the maintenance of the local municipalities.



She clearly categorized your position from 1995 to now as a "complete flip-flop." Those were her words.  
1500

I just want to ask you this, Minister: How do you as a member of this government, particularly as a member of a government that prides itself in keeping its promises, justify doing the complete opposite here, with the establishment of the megacity, to what you promised before the election?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** That's quite the contrary. I was on that study team and I can tell you that there were eight points made by that study team. One of them was to eliminate a layer of government, and we're doing that. Another one was to create local government; we're doing that.

**Interjection:** Let me see, who's that committee? Derwyn Shea, Morley Kells —

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** Derwyn wants to hear the answer.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Where did Morley go?

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** Morley just left.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** If we could just get a little order, the member for High Park would have the opportunity to hear the answer. Minister.

**Hon Mr Leach:** As I mentioned, there were eight points made in that study, and I can tell the members of the opposition that this government has addressed each and every one of those points in a positive manner.

**Mr Silipo:** You addressed those points by simply doing the opposite. You can say you addressed the points. You promise you're were going to keep the local municipalities and then you do the opposite in Metropolitan Toronto. You say you're going to eliminate a layer of government; you add another layer of government on top of the existing ones in terms of the GTA, and one could argue even in terms of Metropolitan Toronto.

But, Minister, your friends are abandoning you all over the place. Last night we even saw your friend Mel Lastman finally come on board and support the need for a referendum. You've today got your friend Al Tonks who says he feels betrayed by what you're doing and maybe over the next few days he'll come to his senses and see the benefits of a referendum.

Minister, I want to ask you this, because again your friend Joyce Trimmer says that if the government has the gall to ignore the people and to proceed to implement the megacity against the express wishes of the people through a referendum to the opposite, you won't last long. Those were her words.

Minister, will you at least slow down your megacity legislation long enough to ensure that the referendum takes —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I addressed that question yesterday. We've advised everyone, including the mayors, that the referendum would not be accepted by this government, so whether the legislation is introduced before or after is irrelevant.

I'd like to return to the Trimmer report. Here are the eight findings: (1) "There is too much government" —

we agree with that; (2) "The current two-level system of government is too expensive, too bureaucratic and too unaccountable" — we agree with that; (3) "The government closest to the people is considered the most responsive, efficient and accountable government" — we agree with that; (4) "Political boundaries often act as impediments to effective, efficient service delivery" — we're dealing with that; (5) "Broader regional coordination for transportation is essential" — we're doing that; (6) "Unfairness in the property tax system is broadly acknowledged and in need of immediate attention" — we're doing that; (7) "In order to achieve greater efficiencies, local government should encourage more private-public partnerships" — we agree with that —

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**Ms Lankin:** No, we want to hear number 8.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** All right. I hear 8 is the number. Is there unanimous consent to hear number 8?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Let's hear 8.

**Hon Mr Leach:** "There is a high value placed on local communities in the sense of belonging which a strong community engenders. Policies must be designed to protect and preserve the uniqueness of neighbourhoods," and by creating the community councils —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Thank God there's not a number 9.

**Mr Marchese:** There was, but I lost.

## SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

**Mr Bruce Smith (Middlesex):** My question is to the minister responsible for women's issues. Recent reports in the media and public statements by several groups have included the assertion that the government-commissioned report on violence against women includes a plan to force women from emergency shelters after a stay of only 24 to 48 hours. Yesterday's London Free Press also contained an article referring to the Harris government's planned funding cuts for rape crisis centres.

Is it true that women will be prematurely removed from shelters, and is funding for rape crisis centres being cut?

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues):** In answer, it's absolutely and unequivocally not true that this government will ever force women out of transition houses in 24 to 48 hours. I think it's a kind of fearmongering and it's irresponsible and a blatant misconception of what is contained in the consultants' report. It's a blatant misrepresentation of what is contained in the report on violence against women and indeed of this government's position.

In answer to the second part of the question, furthermore, there's no truth whatsoever to claims that this government has planned funding cuts to rape crisis centres. There are currently 34 rape crisis centres in our province which receive over \$9 million in provincial funding, and not one penny of this funding has been cut since this government came into office.



**Mr Smith:** Critics of the consultants' report on violence against women have called on you to throw away the report because it simply has no value. Minister, is there no value in analysing this report and its recommendations?

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** Again, I think it's critical that the report be given due consideration. It's just one part of our ongoing process to address violence against women and come up with more positive solutions. I think also the government will only consider recommendations — and everyone knows this; the Premier stated it as well — that will help improve the safety of women and their children.

I would ask the question myself: Do critics, including the members opposite, disagree with the report's recommendations that Ontario's anti-violence strategy should include, and I'd like to read them, "focusing on the safety of women and children" as a top priority; "making the perpetrator accountable"; "ensuring that children who witness abuse or who have been abused do not grow up to become victims or perpetrators" — this is out of the report — "helping children learn non-violent methods for solving problems"; "developing comprehensive, accessible and appropriate services"? This is page 38 of the Framework for Action report, and I think it's extremely important that these fundamental principles —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

#### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development. It's now clear that what you've dumped on to municipalities — welfare, child care, social housing and care for the elderly — will force residential and business property taxes to go through the roof. Small businesses in particular will see a huge increase in their business taxes and they'll be crippled by it.

As Minister of Economic Development, small business people will look to you for some answers. Are you not concerned about the devastating impact this will have on small businesses and their ability to create new jobs? How do you answer that?

**Hon William Saunderson (Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism):** I'm very pleased to speak about small business in Ontario and in this particular region. We have been doing so much for small business over the last 18 months that we see a tremendous expansion of small business in Ontario. I can tell you that what we have done for small business, such as reducing the personal income tax rate and reducing the employee health tax on the first \$400,000 of payroll, are the things that generate jobs in the small business community. I challenge you over there to tell me how you think small business is going to suffer because of what we're doing.

1510

**Mr Cordiano:** It's obvious they're suffering. They're suffering, first of all, because they have a minister of doing nothing. This is a minister who's done nothing for small business.

Minister, your government's entire plan —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order.

**Mr Cordiano:** Minister, your government's sole plan for job creation was based on your 30% income tax cut. In reality, we now know there is no income tax cut. You've just dumped huge costs on to municipalities and you've guaranteed huge increases in residential and business property tax.

Even Paul Pagnuelo of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation has said: "The government of Ontario is playing a shell game with taxpayers. The 30% tax cut will be eaten up by the property tax increases as a result of the offloading on to municipalities."

Why don't you just admit that there is in reality no tax cut and in fact small businesses will be hurt and their ability to create jobs will be severely restricted? Why don't you stand up and tell us all about that?

**Hon Mr Saunderson:** I'm very glad to stand up and tell him about this. First of all, the Minister of Finance said that when you hear tomorrow what he has to say, things will become a lot more clear, and I hope you start to listen for a change.

Secondly, when the member over there talks about — *Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** The member for Wellington, come to order.

**Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington):** Pardon me?

**The Speaker:** Was it you? I thought I heard you yelling. I'm sorry; I thought it was the member for Wellington. I could have been wrong. I apologize.

Okay. Minister of — Minister.

**Hon Mr Saunderson:** I realize it's a long title with heavy responsibilities.

What I would like to say to the member is that, yes, our personal income tax rate has meant a great deal to small business, but I can tell you that it has been eaten away by your friends in Ottawa with their payroll taxes.

#### SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** To the minister responsible for women's issues: Ever since the disclosure of the contents of her consultants' report, she's been scrambling to do damage control. Part of that damage control has been her meeting yesterday with representatives of women's organizations who serve survivors of violence and abuse. During that meeting, you, Minister, told those representatives that funding levels of violence-against-women initiatives will remain the same in the next fiscal year. That follows the announcement of the Minister of Community and Social Services that the funding will include picking up the 20% per diem that municipalities currently pay.

There's a contradiction there, because if the funding is going to remain the same yet you're going to pick up the 20% per diem, where are the cuts going to be made to pay for that 20% per diem that you're picking up from municipalities?

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues):** I forward that to the Minister of Community and Social Services.



**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** The reason we are saying we are assuming 20% is because we are assuming the additional 20%. That is the money that is being put forward for the violence-against-women shelters.

**Mr Kormos:** She doesn't get it. She doesn't understand the math involved. The budget for violence against women last year was \$48 million. This minister now tells us that the ministry is going to be paying that 20% per diem out of the \$48 million. What that means is there is going to be a reduction in support for other facets of programs in violence against women.

Minister, the obfuscation has got to stop, and stop now. You've got to come clean. You've got to tell us, are you going to maintain the funding at \$48 million or are you going to increase the funding to allow for the assumption of the 20% per diems? Which one is it? Are you going to cut or are you going to maintain the current funding plus the 20% that you're picking up on per diem payments for residents in shelters, for victims of violence against women?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Just to remind the honourable member, in April of this year we announced \$11 million in additional funding for the renovation and expansion of women's shelters. Perhaps he's forgetting about that. As you know, we have taken the education costs off the property tax as part of a complete transfer and shift of responsibilities and funding.

**Mr Kormos:** Ecker, you can't have it both ways.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** So as we are lifting expenses, including women's shelters, we are assuming the responsibility —

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Mr Speaker, I'm sorry. I'm trying to answer his question but it's a little difficult with the yelling he's doing.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Do your best.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Thank you, sir. We are assuming those costs as part of our responsibility in the cost transfers that are occurring with this week's announcements.

#### TELEMARKETING FRAUD

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener):** My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. People in my riding of Kitchener have been complaining to me about fraudulent scratch-and-win cards, the ones that you have to call 1-900 for. There is this 1-900 number that you have to call to claim a prize. We've all seen them. They get circulated in the newspapers and we get them in the third-class mail, the mail distribution systems that are dropped into your mailboxes on Sundays. They purport to give away \$10,000 instant cash prizes, 52-inch colour televisions worth \$3,000, Honolulu prizes etc.

In order to supposedly claim these prizes, the people in my riding are going to have to pay up to \$25 for this 1-900 phone number. What advice do you have for the people in my riding so that they can protect themselves?

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** I thank the member for Kitchener for the question. Yes, this fraudulent tele-

marketing is a problem all across the province and really for everyone's riding in this room, and I think we need to do more. Certainly we have sent out consumer alerts to the consumers to warn them about these things. If a consumer receives a scratch ticket in the mail, which they have been doing quite a lot lately, they should be wary because if they've been notified they have won a contest when they haven't entered one, obviously there's something wrong with this picture.

We certainly have to point out that a lot of the costs haven't been described properly. If anything, the operators try to keep these people on the phone. Sometimes they warn them, sometimes they don't, that there's a cost for being on the phone. Consequently, many of these people, many of them elderly people and disabled, do receive huge costs back —

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** Mr Speaker, this is important for everyone, certainly for the elderly who are at home and receive these things, where they get huge bills that they have to pay. Certainly this is something that is important for them to know and be educated about.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** In answer to some of the heckling that was going on over here, I want to assure you that the number that they have to call is not 1-900-NDP-SCAM.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Wettlaufer:** Minister, what is our government doing to protect the consumers in my riding? What is being done to fight telemarketing fraud and the unethical use of these 1-900 —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Kitchener, it probably isn't out of order directly but it certainly isn't within keeping in this place and I would ask that you withdraw that comment. I would ask that you withdraw.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** I withdraw it.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** This is a government member's question.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** Minister, what is our government doing —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order, please. Minister.

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** I don't believe that was a question.

**The Speaker:** The member for Kitchener.  
1520

**Mr Wettlaufer:** Minister, what are we doing to protect the consumers in my riding? What are we doing to fight these telemarketing scams and the unethical use of these 1-900 numbers in Ontario?

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** Now there's a question for you, Mr Speaker.

Certainly, for anyone who is concerned about these telemarketing fraudulent companies that are preying upon the elderly and the disabled, this should be of interest to them. We have been working with Phonebusters, an initiative that combines the efforts of our ministry, Industry Canada, the RCMP and the OPP, and now we have been joined by certain members of the private sector, and certainly the Canadian Bankers Association



and the Canadian Courier Association have all combined their efforts to fight this type of fraud.

It has been very effective. We have seen over the last year a reduction in this type of fraud of about 40% in the province of Ontario, which is significant in terms of protecting the elderly and the vulnerable in this province.

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Minister of Finance and it has to do with property taxes. The government is going to ask the Legislature to approve the most sweeping changes in the history of the province perhaps. We've now looked at what you are transferring to the municipalities. In our judgement, you are taking about \$5.4 billion off the property tax and you are adding \$6.5 billion to the property tax. You are adding \$1.1 billion as a responsibility of the municipalities of this province. That means property taxes will go up almost 10%. That's what you're asking the association of municipalities to do. At the same time, yesterday in the media you announced that property tax will drop by 10%.

The question is this: I can only assume when you said that that you have a study that is ready to be presented to the Legislature that will prove the property taxes in Ontario will drop by 10%. Are you prepared to table that study today so we can resolve the conflict between what we believe to be a 7% to 10% increase in property tax and what you're now saying is a 10% decrease?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** With the announcements that have taken place over the last three days what we have asked the municipalities in Ontario to assume as their responsibility is approximately \$6.4 billion in programs, and what we have announced in terms of tax room is \$5.4 billion from the education portion of property tax and a \$1-billion-a-year community reinvestment fund, so the net effect is that at the end of the day, in this year's dollars, it will be a wash, so to speak, in terms of —

**Mr Phillips:** So to speak.

**Hon Mr Eves:** No, it will be, it will be exactly that. It will be \$6.4 billion equals \$6.4 billion. That's not difficult to understand.

Given that, in a lot of the areas municipalities are being asked to assume responsibility for, such as social assistance, that is a declining expense.

Education, on the other hand, has increased. The education portion of taxes has increased in Ontario between 1985 and 1995 by 120%. We are assuming that.

**Mr Phillips:** Your assumption is causing Ontario to make a fundamental change, and I don't think you've done your work, Minister. Yesterday you said in the paper you had, and I challenge you today: Table the study that supports your conclusion yesterday that property taxes will drop by 10%. Are you prepared to table today, as you ask us to approve this sweeping legislation, the evidence that you said publicly yesterday supports that property taxes will drop by 10%? Yes or no, will you table that study today?

**Hon Mr Eves:** First of all, what I said yesterday was that there should be the ability between now and the year 2000 for municipalities —

### *Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Eves:** That's what I said; that's exactly what I said — for municipalities to take advantage of some of the programs they are assuming responsibility for to find efficiencies in the system, and on average they should be able to reduce property taxes by as much as 10%. That is exactly what I said yesterday — if you'd like a tape of the interview, you may have it — and that's exactly what I'm saying again today. I reiterate what I said earlier in question period today: In some municipalities, taxes will drop in excess of 10%.

### CARDIAC SURGERY

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** My question is for the Minister of Health. Even before the debacle of this week and the damage that it's going to incur on communities and people, we have had some major health problems in northern Ontario. One of them in particular is a growing waiting list for heart surgery in Sudbury.

In November 1995 there were 60 people on that waiting list. In November 1996 there were over 230, and that list is growing. Minister, do you know that we have that problem? What are you going to do about this terrible situation?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** The Ministry of Health has in the past invested some \$16 million, I guess it is, to fund 1,500 more heart surgeries across the province — this is over the past year — yet I understand what the member opposite is saying. The waiting lists are still certainly not satisfactory to me and to the Ministry of Health.

The Ministry of Health is working with the cardiac care network. The cardiac care network is a special subcommittee to undertake an investigation, and we'll be looking forward to the recommendations from this particular committee as to what further actions the government might take.

**Mr Martin:** It's not solving the problem, Minister. Anybody you talk to — the doctors, the patients and the families, anybody involved in this issue — will tell you that there's a major problem, and the waiting list itself is causing other complications. The doctors tell me your government has put a quota on. I had a family in my office on Friday; they had lost their father and their husband because of this waiting list and some of the complications that are being caused.

Will you today, as minister, personally commit to looking into this and making sure that the waiting list in Sudbury is reduced significantly before more people die in our part of Ontario?

**Hon David Johnson:** I'd be more than happy to indicate to the member opposite that I personally am taking a very active interest and am very concerned about this situation in Sudbury and right across Ontario. For example, the government has reinvested some \$2 million in cardiac stents, which are devices which lead to decreased need for heart surgery. We've invested some \$16 million over the past year or so and the number of cardiac surgeries has increased by almost 9%, and yet, as I indicated to the member opposite, I am not satisfied and the Ministry of Health is not satisfied.



We have been working with the cardiac care network, a special subcommittee. I am anxiously awaiting the results of that committee. I expect it not long into the future and I wish to reassure the member opposite that we'll certainly take their recommendations seriously. We do need to address this problem.

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## PETITIONS

### RENT REGULATION

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** I have a petition to the Ontario Legislature.

"To the Premier, Michael Harris, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Al Leach, and members of the Ontario provincial Legislature:

"We, the undersigned, protest this government's actions against tenants described below.

"The Rent Control Act protects Ontario's 3.3 million tenants. Rent control allows for security and stability in their homes and communities. Uncontrolled rent increases leave tenants, their families and other communities open to eviction, personal distress, and contribute directly to social instability. We want this government to stop any actions that would allow uncontrolled rents.

"Further, this government is considering changes to the landlord and Tenant Act favourable to landlords for easier and faster evictions. This is unacceptable to Ontario tenants and damaging to Ontario's communities.

"This government also plans to get rid of public housing and has halted the creation of basement apartments and a new supply of affordable non-profit housing. These types of housing are necessary for low- and moderate-income tenants to obtain accommodation they can afford. The government must cease all actions that reduce the affordability and availability of these kinds of housing.

"This government has eliminated funding for United Tenants of Ontario, five municipal tenant federations and other important tenant services at a time when they're attacking all tenant rights. Funding for those groups must be reinstated so that Ontario's tenants and not just their landlords are able to bring their views to bear in government deliberations on tenant rights and protection. A consultation process with tenant organizations should be initiated immediately to develop a plan for sustainable funding for services to tenants."

I affix my signature to this.

### TVONTARIO

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from about 50 residents of Blind River and Elliot Lake. It says:

"Whereas TVOntario has been providing Ontarians of all ages with high-quality educational programs and services delivered through television and other media for 5 years;

"Whereas TVOntario provides universal access to educational broadcasting in the most effective way possible;

"Whereas TVOntario provides essential broadcast services to communities in northern Ontario;

"Whereas TVOntario has an extensive community-based advisory network spanning the province;

"Whereas TVOntario is committed to increasing net self-generated revenues by 15% every year;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To formally commit to the province's continued support of TVOntario as a publicly owned educational network."

I support the petition and I affix my name to it.

### PUBLIC LIBRARIES

**Mr W. Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew):** I have a petition that was forwarded to me by the Arnprior Public Library and it reads as follows:

"Whereas we believe that a continuing provincial interest in public libraries in Ontario is fundamental to the rights of all Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, hereby respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to maintain the provincial interest in public libraries by ensuring the continuance of the following:

"(1) grants to ensure that all Ontarians have equalized access to library materials and services;

"(2) coordination of resource-sharing programs such as interlibrary loan and Internet access;

"(3) policy to ensure the future of the network of Ontario public libraries;

"(4) provincial assistance directly to libraries at the service level, for example, through Southern Ontario Library Service and Ontario Library Service-North;

"(5) legislation that maintains the autonomy of public library boards."

I submit this petition with 134 signatures of individuals who use the Arnprior library.

### ONTARIO CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTE

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** I have a petition to the Legislature and to the Honourable Robert Runciman which reads:

"We, the undersigned, believe that helping reduce crime and abuse in our communities is our responsibility, as employees of the Ministry of Correctional Services, as professionals in related fields and as concerned citizens;

"That closing institutions which provide specialized services to women and treatment to men does not achieve that goal;

"That physical, emotional and sexual abuse is often transmitted from one generation to the next, with tremendous costs to society;

"That treatment aimed at breaking that cycle must include the abuser so that another generation of children is not raised with the same destructive lessons;

"That, as Mr Ross Virgo has stated, 'the Ontario Correctional Institute is a therapeutic community known around the world for their techniques';

"That research statistics support anecdotal evidence that we are effective in changing abusive behaviour;



"That a therapeutic community cannot exist in a superprison;

"Save victims and money by keeping what works open."

I have attached my signature to this document because I agree with it.

### RENT REGULATION

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** I've got a petition from the Etobicoke Public Housing Fight Back Campaign, where they say tenants in the Etobicoke community are coming together to join the fight against what is happening around public housing and the weakening of the tenant laws. It's a petition to the Ontario assembly addressed to the Premier, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and members of the provincial Legislature.

"We, the undersigned, protest this government's actions against tenants described below.

"The Rent Control Act protects Ontario's 3.3 million tenants. Rent control allows for security and stability in their homes and communities. Uncontrolled rent increases leave tenants, their families and Ontario communities open to eviction, personal distress, and contribute directly to social instability. We want this government to stop any actions that would allow uncontrolled rents.

"Further, this government is considering changes to the Landlord and Tenant Act favourable to the landlords for easier and faster evictions. This is unacceptable to Ontario tenants and damaging to Ontario communities.

"This government also plans to get rid of public housing, has halted the creation of basement apartments and the new supply of affordable non-profit housing. These types of housing are necessary for low- and moderate-income tenants to obtain accommodation they can afford. The government must cease all actions that reduce the affordability and availability of these kinds of housing.

"This government has eliminated funding for United Tenants of Ontario/Locataires unis de l'Ontario, five municipal tenant federations and other important tenant services at a time when they are attacking all tenant rights. Funding for these groups must be reinstated so that Ontario's tenants and not just their landlords are able to bring their views to bear in government deliberations on tenant rights and protections. A consultation process with tenant organizations should be initiated immediately to develop a plan for sustainable funding for services to tenants."

I affix my signature to this very good petition.

### ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** I'm pleased to present some petitions from Rocco Dinardo, the chairperson of the parent communication committee of the Carleton Roman Catholic School Board, submitted to myself and the member for Carleton.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the right of Catholic ratepayers to govern Catholic education in Ontario is constitutionally protected

in the British North America Act and the Constitution Act; and

"Whereas the Minister of Education and Training is reviewing and considering a number of reforms to the education system in Ontario; and

"Whereas a number of these proposed reforms would have a serious negative impact on Catholic education;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We strongly urge that the Minister of Education and Training be requested to reaffirm the government's commitment to the maintenance of Roman Catholic denominational rights ensuring that any reforms will not lessen or abrogate any such rights;

"And further, that the minister enter into realistic and meaningful consultation with all education stakeholders that will lead to positive changes for students."

### NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I have affixed my signature.

### PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads as follows:

"Whereas the Mike Harris government is attacking workers' compensation benefits and the rights of injured workers; and

"Whereas Tory plans include taking \$15 billion from injured workers and giving \$6 billion to employers, including the government's rich corporate friends; and

"Whereas Cam Jackson, the former Minister without Portfolio with responsibility for gutting the WCB, refused to hold public hearings, choosing to meet secretly with business and insurance industry representatives" — including the secret meeting in Sudbury — "and

"Whereas the WCB has about \$7.6 billion in assets and its unfunded liability has been steadily shrinking; and

"Whereas the Jackson report and WCB legislation are just part of a coordinated attack on occupational health and safety protections for working families in Ontario; and



"Whereas the Tory plan also includes abolition of the internationally respected Occupational Disease Panel; and

"Whereas the government needs to hear the message that taking money from injured workers and lowering incentives for employers to make workplaces safer is not the way to make Ontario a better place to live;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to hold full, province-wide public hearings on WCB reform; to listen to the voice of the people calling for improved occupational health and safety protection; and to tell the Tory government to call off its attack on the dignity and standard of living of injured workers and their families."

This is signed by about 100 residents who live in the riding of Sudbury East. I have signed it as well and I agree with them entirely.

### CHOICE IN HEALTH CARE

**Mr John L. Parker (York East):** I have a petition here to present on behalf of my friend and colleague the honourable member for Don Mills. In accordance with the rules, I will summarize it by reading the salient parts. It reads, in part, as follows:

"To the Parliament of Ontario:

"I petition that I be confirmed in the right to make and act upon my own choices with respect to medical and health therapies;

"I request that the Legislature enact a choice in health care act to ensure that consumers and taxpayers will have a meaningful choice and access to safe, effective and cost-effective health care that meets their needs and that the government of Ontario take immediate action to eliminate the patterns of abusive actions of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, which, contrary to their mandate and the public interest, attack and punish doctors simply because they employ complementary medical therapies."

### FIRE SAFETY

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This is a petition in response to Bill 84, and it's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the firefighters of Sudbury and Ontario are very concerned about Bill 84;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 is unfair;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 is discriminatory;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 endangers the wellbeing of the people of Ontario;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 requires extensive changes;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 needs broad provincial public hearings before implementation;

"We, the undersigned, therefore petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand the Solicitor General to write Bill 84 before being enacted into law and only after extensive public hearings across Ontario."

I affix my signature to this petition, as I'm in agreement with it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Further petitions? The Chair recognizes the member for Dovercourt.

### ADJOURNMENT MOTION

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** Mr Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Mr Silipo has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the wish of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members; it will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1543 to 1613.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Mr Silipo has moved adjournment of the House.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

Those opposed, rise and remain standing.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 25; the nays are 55.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

### PETITIONS

(continued)

### ÉCOLES À CHARTE

**M. John R. Baird (Nepean):** J'ai une pétition adressée à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

«Attendu que le gouvernement de l'Ontario se penche présentement sur la réforme du système de l'éducation et que l'implantation d'écoles à charte représente une option à considérer ;

«Attendu que le gouvernement ne possède pas de politique en matière de création d'écoles à charte et que le ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation étudie actuellement le fonctionnement d'écoles à charte existantes ;

«Attendu que le Collège catholique Samuel-Genest est maintenant voué à perdre sa mission, son caractère particulier et sa réputation suite aux récentes décisions du Conseil des écoles catholiques de langue française de la région d'Ottawa-Carleton ;

«Attendu que la création d'un projet pilote d'écoles à charte à titre expérimental dans le contexte ontarien pourrait accélérer le processus d'élaboration d'une politique en matière d'écoles à charte,

«Nous, soussignés, adressons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario la pétition suivante :

«Nous, parents et élèves, et élèves du Collège catholique Samuel-Genest d'Ottawa, demandons que le gouvernement de l'Ontario accorde à notre collège le statut d'école à charte à titre de projet pilote pour implantation dès septembre 1997.»

J'ai écrit mon nom sur cette pétition.

### ADJOURNMENT MOTION

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** Mr Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The member for Nickel Belt has moved adjournment of the House.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."



In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members; it will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1618 to 1648.*

**The Speaker:** The member for Nickel Belt has moved adjournment of the House.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing and be recognized by the Clerk.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 22; the nays are 51.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

Reports by committees. The member for Wellington.

## ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington):** I move that we now move to orders of the day.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The member for Wellington has moved that we move to orders of the day. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### CITY OF TORONTO ACT, 1996

### LOI DE 1996 SUR LA CITÉ DE TORONTO

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 103, An Act to replace the seven existing municipal governments of Metropolitan Toronto by incorporating a new municipality to be known as the City of Toronto / *Projet de loi 103, Loi visant à remplacer les sept administrations municipales existantes de la communauté urbaine de Toronto en constituant une nouvelle municipalité appelée la cité de Toronto.*

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** In my remarks yesterday, I outlined the role of the trustees and encouraged municipalities to cooperate with them in the best interests of the taxpayer. I also pointed out why a referendum would be inappropriate and would be inconsistent and inconclusive.

We've also heard criticism that amalgamation means local government will be less accessible to the average citizen. Again, I say the opposite is true. Local government will be more accessible.

Under the provisions of the City of Toronto Act, neighbourhood committees will be created. These committees will give citizens the chance to be directly involved in municipal government. People will be able to tell their elected representatives what's important to them and what the local priorities really are. How can anyone deny that a single, unified system of government in Toronto will be more accessible than the present system, and how can anyone say that the present system, with so many levels of government, so much duplication and overlap and so many confusing mandates and conflicting priorities, makes government more accessible?

What's the point of having an accessible municipal government just around the corner if you don't have the

foggiest idea what it's responsible for? Making local government more accountable and accessible in Metro Toronto does not mean that we should give up on an even more essential task, and that is making sure that the key services, infrastructure and planning can be coordinated right across the entire GTA.

The greater Toronto area is one big, interdependent economic region. Only by working together will the region prosper, along with every one of its individual communities.

We're already moving ahead on creating the Greater Toronto Services Board. There is consensus that we need to coordinate the big-ticket services right across the GTA, such as sewer and water, garbage disposal, major roads and transit and economic development. We've already appointed a long-time civil servant, Milt Farrow, to develop the foundation for the services board, and we expect his report to be finished by March 31. If legislation is necessary to establish the services board, it will be introduced this year.

Finally, I think by now we've all heard the comment that there was no mention in the Common Sense Revolution about amalgamating Metro Toronto. What exactly did we promise in the Common Sense Revolution? We said that Ontario would have less government. We said that there should be fewer politicians, there should be less bureaucracy and there should be less overlap and duplication. This legislation will help us reach those goals.

After January 1, 1998, local government in Metro Toronto will be more streamlined, more accountable and more efficient. Everyone will benefit from a single, strong, unified city of Toronto — residents, taxpayers and businesses, not just in the greater Toronto area but right across Ontario. The transition will be carefully planned and well executed.

To make sure that happens, a transition team will be appointed to look carefully at all the municipal facilities and services within Metro. The team will consult with the public, they'll talk to local politicians, they'll talk to municipal staff members and, working together, they'll find the best way to eliminate duplication and deliver services locally. Together, they'll find the best way to prepare for the new city government.

Amalgamation will reduce the size of government; it will reduce the number of politicians from 106 to 45, and services will be delivered at a price that we can afford. A unified Toronto will have a better chance of bringing investment into the GTA and it will give us greater clout in the international arena.

A strong, unified Toronto will give us the best of both worlds. Local communities will have more influence over local decisions and local services, and the new city of Toronto council will be able to make better and more effective decisions about the matters that affect everyone in this city.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Comments and questions?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** This is indeed a radical bill, a blockbuster in terms of a bill, a bulldozing bill, that has been introduced by what has been referred to by many as the bully government.

The idea of a megacity, of course, was not contained in the document called the Common Sense Revolution, so



many people I think had anticipated that while there would be some restructuring taking place — I think it's fair to say they anticipated that — I know of no one who anticipated that the government would go against every report that's been out there, except the one report that it did in three weeks, including the Golden report, and turn around to have one big, huge city which will be larger than many provinces.

There are people outside Metropolitan Toronto who are quite concerned that what you are creating is another province. It's going to be so powerful that the rest of the province of Ontario is going to be in its shadow, and I think many of your rural members and small-town members harbour that concern in their minds.

There is a suggestion that this is going to be more efficient. I suggest that people need access to their local politicians to deal with local items. Although we all like to think we're close enough to the people we represent, the local alderman, who is now called councillor in many areas, is probably closest and deals with problems which are of direct concern to people.

This all goes back to the tax scheme you have. You have to borrow some \$5 billion a year to pay for a tax scheme which will give the richest people in our province the most money. The radical changes you are making to feed this foolish tax scheme you've come forward with I'm sure were not even contemplated by your members, and I believe that just as hospitals are closing to feed that tax cut in the background, this bill is part of that tax scheme.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** We know that what this bill does is mark the end of the democratic process as it applies to municipal government in Metropolitan Toronto. We know that what this government is bent on doing is ignoring the democratic rights of citizens across this great metropolis. They are hell-bent on imposing their will, even if that means that they are going completely 180 degrees opposite to what they said in the election and prior to the election they would do, completely opposite to what the same minister who is introducing this bill, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, said together with other members of this government, the member for High Park-Swansea being one, with support from the now Chair of Management Board, in a report that they put together for the now Premier of the province, Mike Harris, which said, among other things, that they would not eliminate local municipalities in Metropolitan Toronto. Now they are doing the opposite, and they are insisting on doing that in a cavalier fashion, in a way that ignores every democratic process of this institution of this province.

As bad as that is, we know that's only part of the game they are playing, because we also know, and we are seeing in spades this week, that this bill is simply one in a number of steps aimed at downloading on to the property tax base not just millions of dollars but billions of dollars from the provincial tax base, so that they can find the \$3 billion they have to find to pay for their money tax scheme. That's what this is about. It's about asking the average family to pay more taxes through increases in property taxes, and what's worrying this minister is that people across this province and in Metro-

politan Toronto are beginning to understand that this is the game they are into.

1700

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** I'm pleased to give some brief comments in response to the minister. When you cut through all the rhetoric, this really is the next step in an evolution that started 44 years ago with the first creation of Metro Toronto. It was then made even more concise and more accountable in 1967, when it was reduced from 13 municipalities down to six.

Now, having looked at all of the numbers from those six cities, having had the opportunity over the last 18 months to look at the 60 different studies that have taken place in the last few years on what should be happening here in Metro Toronto, having had a chance to talk to our constituents, to talk to the stakeholders that are most affected, this move reflects the most realistic and the most accountable mechanism of moving forward to a city that's combined and coordinated in its service delivery, that offers the best services for the lowest possible cost, and that offers us the opportunity to market Toronto as one city across the world, meaning we won't compete with each other when it comes to getting those new jobs, the investment in factories and new service bureaus here in Ontario. The fact of the matter remains: This is the first time in many years that the various parts of Metro will be able to work together in cooperation and not in competition.

We've heard a lot of other rhetoric, some of it already here today, that this move makes it less democratic, that there's less accountability at the municipal level. Well, the fact remains that in some parts of Scarborough, the wards will become smaller. If anyone suggests that a councillor can't do the job of representing 50,000 people, there are at least three councillors in Scarborough who would take great offence because they've been representing 60,000 people for the last nine years and they've been re-elected twice, so presumably they're doing a good job.

What's really at stake here is the fact that the status quo is no longer an option. We must move forward. We must create a more viable city, and this bill does just that.

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** I actually have a question for the minister and hope he will address himself to it when his time comes. But I heard him say distinctly that there will be better decision-making on the local level and there will be better services. Now, I cannot for the life of me and from our side figure out how you're going to have better decision-making on the local level. On the local level, you've got the municipalities set up as they are right now. You had other options. You didn't have to destroy all of them; you had other options. It isn't just a question of reducing the politicians and saying to the people of Ontario: "Look, we've got 106 people now, 106 municipal councillors. We're going to reduce them down to 45."

Of course, you will not find that we will be totally critical of your reducing the politicians, but that is not the real issue. The real issue is this: As it stands right now, we are living right here in the best livable city in the world. That's an agreement that all of us who have been looking at this city have come to conclude.



And yet, okay, you're saying, "If this is not broken, then why fix it?" At the same time, of course, we understand that there are indeed some municipal and monetary restraints that we have to look at — no doubt about that — and you will have our support in terms of reducing the numbers, no question about that. But the way you are going about it dictatorially and, secondly, the way you are going about it to destroy the very municipalities where the decision-making is the best, where the services are the best, is something that's objectionable.

I submit, when all of us would agree as it stands right now that we're living in the best livable city in the world and you're tinkering with it, that in the end the arrow will fly right back to you because you're going to be accused of destroying the very city that you are proud to live in.

**The Acting Speaker:** The minister has two minutes to respond.

**Hon Mr Leach:** First, for my friend from St Catharines, he says the new council won't be as close to the people as the existing councils are. Right now, people in this area don't know what council to go to. If they have a problem with the road, do they call Metro? Do they call the local council? What do they do? There's a lot of confusion out there. By having one unified city of Toronto council, people will know who to call when they have a problem.

My friend from the third party says we are not consistent. He says that we did not campaign on creating a single city. He's not correct. As I pointed out earlier, we're doing exactly what we said we would do. We said we would eliminate levels of government; we're doing that. We said we would eliminate duplication; we're doing that. We said we would eliminate waste and we're doing that. We said we would bring better government to the citizens of Metropolitan Toronto and we're doing that. What we're doing is making the best city in the world even better.

The mayors have all agreed that the status quo is not an option. The mayors came up and said that by making changes they could save hundreds of millions of dollars a year. We agree. Change is necessary, and the changes we're proposing are going to be in the best interests of every citizen in the Metropolitan Toronto area, the greater Toronto area and right across Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** It's wonderful to get an opportunity to speak to this critical issue. I guess one of the critical things people have been saying right across Metro, which is their city, which is their community, is that they want to be heard on this. Up until now that has been most difficult, so I think a lot of people welcome, as I do, an opportunity to try to give the other side of the story. As you know, it's been very popular in the big press to cheerlead on the megacity and to give that side of the story, but I think it's about time there's an opportunity for people's feelings about their city to be heard.

This is not just about numbers. That's what's missing here. This is about people who for years or decades, in some cases their whole lives, have lived in East York or Toronto or York. They've raised their children there; they've joined community associations, school associ-

ations; they've set up a small business; they've renovated homes.

They went into neighbourhoods. I don't know if any of you around here know what Cabbagetown looked like 20 or 30 years ago or what the Annex looked like 20 or 30 years ago. These people went into rundown areas that many others abandoned in the suburban flight — they went to Oakville; they went to Oshawa; they left. But other people came into the city and with their own blood, sweat and tears they rebuilt their own homes that everybody else wrote off. One by one, these homes became neighbourhoods because people came back. They came back and they went to the local schools. They set up ratepayers' associations. They set up community groups. This is what they did. They didn't do it just for six months; they did it in some cases, as I said, for decades. Some people renovated two or three of their own homes in an area just to try to improve an area. Out of that, neighbourhoods grew that became very vibrant and trendy and yuppified, whatever you call them.

It didn't come with any government help. Governments of the past, like this government, didn't recognize the work of people. In fact, what they did and what this government continues to do is that if you renovate or improve your home in Parkdale, they'll come along and increase your assessment. They punish you because you've invested your blood, sweat and tears — and dollars — into a home and made that home better, made the neighbourhood better. Then the government says, "We're going to increase your assessment." That's the only role government played in the past.

Big government didn't help people; it was local government that supported community organizations, and from the grass roots these communities became vibrant again. Whether it be, as I said, a community like Parkdale, the Annex or Lawrence Park, these communities were revitalized.

In my own city of York the same thing happened. People would say, "Never move north of St Clair; it's a rundown area," but a lot of us moved north of St Clair and we formed the Humewood Ratepayers' Association. These were young people with young families who put their blood, sweat and tears into the community, and they did it on their own. They got involved with local government and made it better.

Now all of a sudden big government comes along and says, "Listen, I know what's best for you; we are going to create this monster that's going to be better for you," and basically they're saying, "We don't appreciate the blood, sweat and tears that went into building the cities of Metropolitan Toronto." It didn't happen by accident.

1710

Who knows best about the neighbourhoods of Toronto? Is it Big Brother here at Queen's Park? I don't think so. It's not just this government, as I said. Other governments have refused to recognize the work that went into keeping Toronto and making Toronto — and I believe it, without being a pure booster — the best city in the world to live in. I challenge anyone to show me a city that has more neighbourhoods that have vibrant people, that have interesting people, that have good schools. I know this government likes to criticize the quality of our schools,



but our schools, for a downtown area, are some of the best in the world. They're good because people stayed downtown and went to the public schools, and the public school system helped to make better neighbourhoods. Now this government is going to destroy the public school system and destroy local government.

The people in these communities are not trying to say, "We will not be progressive." They are more progressive than this government ever was. They're saying: "Don't you dare try to impose it on us. We have a right to decide our future." That's all they're telling this government, and this government is saying, "No, we know what's best for you." That is what is so infuriating to the people. They say they want a right to self-determination in their community and neighbourhoods, that despite the warts and despite some of the problems, they have a right of ownership in their neighbourhoods and their city, and no government, federal or provincial, has the right to impose its will on local government.

It is certainly not right in any way for this government to do the most incredible thing that's probably been done to local government, and that is to impose a dictatorship — not a dictatorship, a trusteeship. That was sort of a slip of the tongue. When they announced this law on December 17, proclaimed it as a bill, they imposed trusteeship over duly elected councillors and they said that these trustees were in essence above the law, that they could not be questioned. This is right here in the legislation. The decisions of these trustees imposed by the minister are final, no judicial review; the decisions of the board of trustees are final and shall not even be reviewed or questioned by a court.

Here's a duly elected local government, supported by grass-roots organizations and neighbourhoods, essentially dictated to by an imposed trusteeship that under law has no jurisdiction, but this minister somehow tried to intimate that these people had power when the bill hadn't even gone to second reading. This is unprecedented; it is not right. It is not the Ontario way; it is not the Canadian way. This is what people get most angry about: They want change, they want progressive change in government; they don't want it dictated to them, because they are as intelligent as the government. They are innovative. They want an opportunity.

In terms of the process that preceded this most recently, we've had the Crombie panel set up by the minister. It's most interesting that the Crombie panel members had to swear an oath of secrecy. There were no public meetings with the Crombie panel, they met behind closed doors, so that panel to advise the minister was never open to the public. Second, even the Golden commission; there were no public meetings in the Golden process.

The other thing that really burns people in East York and Toronto and all across Metro is this double standard. The 905 area — there are no amalgamations dictated or ordered — has been given another two to 10 years to get their house in order, and they're saying, "If amalgamation is such a good thing for Metro, why is it not good for the 905?" Why are the people of Metro told, "You have no choice; this bill will become law and there are no other alternatives; we've decided," whereas across the border in Mississauga it's a different approach. They're given

time, they're given negotiators, they're given facilitators, they're given the ability to decide their own fate.

That is what is really at the heart of this, this indifference to the essential democracy that grows out of cities. People living in Toronto or living in East York want to say that. And I should mention about East York. There's a community of 100,000 people, the borough of East York. For years they have said they want to be on their own, and they are one of the most efficient cities you can go to. You ask people in East York about their services. Ask them about their fire services. Ask them about the cleanliness of their neighbourhoods. Ask them about their sense of community. So when a government comes along and says, "You have no choice; we are going to eliminate you" — that was the dictate to East York, as it was to all others. The usual democratic process is to negotiate and to give people due process. They've done this in Hamilton, they're doing it in the 905, they're doing it in Ottawa, but in Toronto, for 2.5 million people, it's dictated: "You must amalgamate. No choice."

There are people in Toronto, in East York, in York, who may want to go for this megacity, but they say, "Listen, I may want the megacity, but I don't like the imposition of Big Brother at Queen's Park telling me that I have to do what I'm told and I don't have a voice in it."

That brings me to the referendum. A lot of people have not supported the referendum approach in the past because of our traditions of representative democracy. But this government, by shutting down democracy in this process, has given people no other alternative. All that's left to the 2.5 million people to have a say, even to have a debate on the future of their neighbourhoods and their cities, is a referendum. So that's what they're forced to go to. This government, a government that wanted referendums for casinos, a government that is passing referendum legislation in the next month or so — in this case, again, the double standard between Toronto and the 905 and everywhere else — on this issue says: "No, you shouldn't have a referendum. We're going to block it. We're not going to listen to you. We don't care if you have it or not. It's irrelevant." You can imagine the reaction of people when they're told that. They say: "Wait a minute, Mr Harris. You were the referendum party. You're going to be bringing this resolution in about more referenda and you tell us in Toronto when we're deciding the future of our city that we can't have one?"

That, as I said, really gets to the heart of the matter, this dictatorial approach to the people of Toronto who have paid taxes, who have invested in this community and paid big taxes to the provincial government, and now the provincial government says: "We don't care what you say. The referendum is just a ploy." This is the answer of this government in respecting the basic democratic right of the people to be heard on the future of their city and their neighbourhoods and their streets.

It's interesting that someone mentioned the Trimmer report, because as you know, this government talks about a mandate, that they have a mandate for change. Well, there was a document and a task force that was set up by the then opposition leader, Mike Harris, now Premier



Harris. It was called the Mike Harris Metro task force. The chair was the then mayor of Scarborough, Joyce Trimmer, a long-time Conservative, a 20-year veteran of local politics in Scarborough. She was the chair. Her co-chairs were the now minister, the Honourable Al Leach, and the member for High Park-Swansea, Derwyn Shea, and Morley Kells was on it and consulted with Dave Johnson, the former mayor of East York.

1720

The Trimmer report, you try to get a copy of this report, and I ask you to read it. The basic principle of the Trimmer report and the conclusion that Al Leach came to was, and this was the election document the Tories went around Metro with, "If we're elected in Metro, what we're going to do, plain and simple, is eliminate regional government and strengthen the six city governments." They went door to door saying: "We don't like Metro. We don't like big government. We are going to strengthen local government." Fundamentally that's what the Trimmer report said. As I said, Al Leach was the co-chair of this.

Where's the mandate, then? If you look in the Common Sense Revolution, there's no reference to massive amalgamation. Where in the Common Sense Revolution would you have this trend towards massive governments in Hamilton and Ottawa? Look at the small communities throughout Ontario. I ask you to show me where that is in the Common Sense Revolution. It's not there. I ask you to show me in the Trimmer report. It's not there.

In fact, the Trimmer report said in its opening paragraph, "Based on our consultation process in the six area municipalities of York, North York, Scarborough, Etobicoke, Toronto and East York, the task force recommends the elimination of the Metro level of government as the cornerstone of the reform process"; in other words, that you keep the six cities and get rid of Metro. That was the cornerstone of the Mike Harris-Al Leach election platform on Metro governance.

I'm trying to bring it to the mandate. There is no mandate for a megacity in the Common Sense Revolution, nor in the pre-election campaign. If Al Leach or any member who got elected would have gone door to door in June 1995 saying they were going to abolish local government, there wouldn't be one member from Metro sitting here. Now that they're elected here, all of a sudden it's, "Abolish six governments and make a giant government." That was not the mandate; that was not what they went into the election with.

I would like to quote the former mayor of Scarborough. This is the chair of the task force, former Mayor Joyce Trimmer. This is the Toronto Star, December 20.

"Trimmer called the legislation" — that is this bill, the megacity bill — "'appalling' and 'dishonest,' while also accusing the government of 'playing games' that threaten to leave Metro neighbourhoods 'whipped to death.'"

Joyce Trimmer goes on to say, "I have always been a Conservative supporter, but I am questioning it right now," said the head of the Trimmer task force on GTA reform, appointed by Premier Harris six months before the 1995 provincial election."

I talked to Joyce Trimmer last night. She was at a ratepayer meeting in North York, where she firmly

reaffirmed her disgust and sense of betrayal on this very relevant issue. If you talk to Joyce Trimmer, she'll tell you this was not the Tory promise, that this totally contradicts what they promised the people of Metro, that they said they were going to abolish Metro and keep the six governments.

It's not just the left wing or the right wing; these are strong, lifelong Tories who are questioning the legitimacy of this megacity madness, as they call it, that is being thrust upon the 2.5 million people of Toronto without a say in the future and its impact.

In terms of the other comments I'd like to make, this government has really put a lot of emphasis on the KPMG report. I don't know if you saw the KPMG report, but the interesting highlight of it seemed to be that you could save \$90 million if you streamlined the already amalgamated police department of Metro.

By the way, this report was commissioned after the minister announced he was in favour of the megacity. The report obviously reaffirmed the minister's assumption.

Here are some of the things KPMG says will save money for Metro: Civilianization of police services. This is what's going to save money? Further outsourcing of certain police functions. They're going to have this fraud and white-collar crime service. They're going to basically privatize this white-collar crime unit.

They're going to also call for storefront police services run by volunteers to save \$90 million. If you look at the KPMG report, two thirds of the savings do not come from amalgamation; they come from efficiencies that can be done without amalgamation. I think that report has been totally put in disrepute because of the inaccuracies in it.

What are the other costs of this amalgamation? KPMG and the minister will never talk about how many millions of dollars it will cost in severance and buyouts for all the officials they're going to have to get rid of in the six cities in Metro. How many hundreds of millions of dollars will it cost to buy out all the top-level bureaucrats in Metropolitan Toronto? We know in Halifax the buyouts were extremely expensive when they went from multiple cities into one city. KPMG doesn't delineate the cost of the buyouts, the cost of transition. What is the cost of that and how much will it cost the new taxpayer of this so-called megacity? That has not been put forward.

Other things that we should look at are in terms of what other experts say about amalgamation. Amalgamation in itself at a certain level may not be that harmful, but if you get to the size of this megacity it hinders or stops competition, innovation, and it drives up costs. Once you get over about a million inhabitants, amalgamation becomes more expensive.

I heard the member for Scarborough East talk about competition between municipalities. He doesn't like that. I'm really surprised he said that, because one of the things the experts have found about local government is that when it's more competitive, it tends to be more cost-efficient. So what's wrong with having the city of North York competing with the city of Mississauga in delivery of service? In other words, North York has an excellent



system of clearing snow on a per capita basis. Why can't you compare that and maybe improve the snow removal service in Mississauga? These are the types of things you can get.

This original exercise about reshaping government in Metro and the 905 area was about a level playing field, because what was happening in Metro is that Metro was being essentially gutted by a flight to the suburbs of industry and commerce. The 905 area's tax situation was much more positive, and there are a number of reasons for that, so the 905 and the 416 were seen to be needing some kind of cohesion. This exercise started as a way of creating a cohesive network throughout the GTA, and that was recommended by Golden very specifically. It was even recommended by Crombie.

But what happens is that when you create, as Mayor McCallion calls it, this monster in the middle of the GTA, you create an imbalance in the GTA, because you've got this city of two and a half million people in the middle and you've got cities in the rest of the GTA that are 500,000, 100,000, 600,000, 200,000. How is that going to be a balanced partnership? It's going to put the GTA out of balance. It's not going to make it work as it should, and I think two of the experts say that quite unequivocally from a practical sense. You've got Hazel McCallion in Mississauga saying this megacity is a megamistake; you've got Anne Golden who says you can't make the GTA work with this huge mega-metropolis in the middle.

1730

This is why we had to reshape government in Metro to improve it for the future, but this is the wrong way to do it because it's going to have this imbalance within the GTA. It's not going to work. It's going to be an artificial creation.

The Golden report says, I think quite correctly, that what you have to do — and she said the same thing, by the way, as Mayor Trimmer and Mike Harris were saying before the election — is strengthen local governments, make them more competitive, make them more innovative. If you've got more competitive equal partners, you're going to have better government, more representative government and more efficient government.

I know the Premier and the minister constantly say one of the reasons we're going to have this megacity is that we're going to win the Olympics this way, that we lost the Olympics because we had all these cities. Obviously the minister and the Premier are not aware of a city in Australia called Sydney. I don't know if you're aware of Sydney, Australia, but it's a city of about four million people. It's got 40 municipalities that work together, and it got the Olympics, by the way. So this kind of hogwash about, "If we have a megacity, we're going to win the Olympics," doesn't hold water.

In fact, when KPMG was asked, "What's another model of an amalgamated city that worked?" the \$100,000 consultant said, "Melbourne, Australia is an example." It so happens KPMG was wrong again, because Melbourne, Australia has 70 independent municipalities. Then they asked KPMG, "What other cities would we sort of copy ourselves after?" and they said, "Cairo, Egypt," and then "Paris, France." Those were the

two major ones they gave — oh, they said New York City too. So we're supposed to model ourselves after New York City, which is on the verge of bankruptcy every two years; Cairo, which is one of the most difficult cities in the world to live in — comparing that to Toronto is an insult because of the substandard living conditions in Cairo; and then the third city is Paris, which is a ward of the federal government and gets most of its funding from the federal government. This is what the minister's consultant said: We're supposed to be like those three cities, or we're supposed to be like Melbourne, which isn't amalgamated.

So when people make generalizations about these quick fixes and these comparisons, I say compare Toronto street by street to any city in the world in terms of our quality of housing, in terms of our cultural ambience, our economic activity, big and small, from our theatre district to our recreational facilities. I say compare Toronto to Cairo on that. Street for street, compare Toronto to any city in western Europe, in the United States, and see how it works. You'll see that Toronto, despite all its problems, has worked quite well.

The people of Toronto or East York I think are saying: "Before you make a change, we want to be part of the change. We don't mind going for change, but we want the same rights that you're giving the people of Mississauga, the same rights that you're giving the people of Hamilton about having a say in the kind of change." They might want four cities or three cities, maybe they'd want to do that, but they certainly don't want to do it when the government is saying, "It's my way or the highway." That is what is getting people's backs up.

Since this announcement was made on December 17, there has never been such an arousal of public sentiment. In the last 30 years, I don't think the people of Metro have been so concerned about what's going to happen. In the city of Toronto there's a group called Citizens for Local Democracy. It started with a meeting of 20 people. It's grown to 700 people who met in Holy Trinity Church last Monday night, 700 people who basically said, "What we want is a say in the future of our community." People from all walks of life — professors, carpenters, homemakers, school teachers, the unemployed — were all there together in that church, and it was as if they were praying and crying out to say: "How can they do this to us? How can this government have the gall and the nerve to impose their will on my city?"

The people of East York have put yellow ribbons around their homes, they're so appalled by a government that's going to tell them that their community is not a worthwhile community. That's what this legislation is telling them. In North York, the same thing is happening. I ask you members who are not from Toronto, please visit the streets of North York, visit the streets of East York, and you will see vibrant communities, some of the cleanest streets you'll find anywhere, the best-kept streets, the best-kept homes and gardens, the aquatic centres. Go to North York if you want to look at quality of services, hard and soft services, in the city of North York.

What you're not appreciating in this legislation too is that almost 50% of all the immigrants who come to Canada pass through Metro, and these immigrants come



to Metro looking for a new haven. In the city of York, my own city, the city of East York, they have welcomed the new immigrants with open arms, and they have blended into the communities and made the communities more prosperous, more vibrant, more culturally and economically active. That's not easy, because you have to have English as a second language. You have to have translation services. There are many people who are poor who come into these areas, and our schools and our community associations have been working very hard to absorb that.

I know a lot of you take that for granted, because maybe in your community you don't have that kind of challenge, but we in Toronto don't take that for granted. The people of East York don't take the work they've done to welcome immigrants to their city for granted. This legislation basically denies that, because it has been a successful welcoming of the Portuguese who came to Toronto, the Italians who came to Toronto, the Sri Lankans who are coming, the Guatemalans who are coming, the Greeks who are coming. It has been an unbelievable success story.

Why would you mess with this success story? This is what is so appalling. Where is the sanity in this? Is there any other city in the world that has such a diversity of people that has worked so successfully? There is no other that is as diverse as Metro and has successfully educated and given social assistance, given housing, given culture, and they have given back to us. Now you say this thing does not matter, that we are going to have this new government that no expert says works. Amalgamations of this magnitude do not improve government.

Ask your own Paul Pagnuelo. By "your own," I mean if you're looking at it from the neo-conservative perspective, the conservative fiscal perspective, he will tell you this is pure, utter nonsense. Paul Pagnuelo of the Ontario Taxpayers Federation says this is too expensive, it drives costs up, it's not efficient, it's not economically viable.

If you talk to Professor Andy Sancton, who is the expert in Canada on reinventing government, making it more efficient, he says this will do nothing but drive costs up, because amalgamation itself saves only 1.8% of the budgets of Metropolitan Toronto. Amalgamation only saves 1.8% of the total budget. So you're going to uproot neighbourhoods, you're going to tear down city halls, you're going to dump welfare and social housing and transit on to these cities for 1.8%? Is that what the people of East York, the people of Leaside, the people of Scarborough are worth? I say they're worth a heck of a lot more than being used for an experiment in neo-conservative governance. The neo-conservatives don't even agree with you.

1740

I'll talk about another so-called Tory thinker, and that is Wendell Cox. I know you won't find Wendell Cox quoted in some of the major dailies in Toronto, as you won't find Andrew Sancton quoted in the major dailies. Wendell Cox is a professional government consultant. Again, he's an expert in reinventing government. He will tell you that this exercise in megacity madness will drive up costs in Metro from 20% to 100%. I'll repeat that: This exercise will drive up costs in Metro from 20% to

100%. That's Wendell Cox, a neo-conservative, Tory-type thinker who condemns this legislation as being not only inefficient; he says it's also anti-democratic.

Because you know what happens when you make governments this big? I've said that what you'll need to see the mega-mayor, whoever he or she will be, is either a limo, a lawyer or a lobbyist, because this new megacity is going to be the size of the province of Alberta in terms of budget and in terms of bureaucrats.

You know how busy that person is going to be. Is he or she going to have time to see the person who's got a problem on their street, in their playground? Is that mega-mayor going to have that time? You know who will be dealing with those problems: faceless bureaucrats. For sure, for every so-called politician they eliminate or so-called bureaucrat they eliminate at the local level, you're going to have a high-paid bureaucrat, faceless, with all kinds of power, working in a centralized office in this new mega-city hall, wherever it's going to be.

I noticed that one of the newspapers was already speculating about how maybe we needed a new mega-city hall, that Toronto city hall won't do because: "We don't want to have anything to do with city of Toronto politicians. We don't want anything to do with Metro Hall; it's not the right place. We don't want to go to North York." So they're already talking about building a new mega-hall for the mega-mayor and the mega-council and the mega-bureaucrats.

I ask the minister and the Premier: How much will the mega-city hall cost that you're going to build? Will you build one, or will the city halls be not good enough for the mega-mayor? You'll need sort of a splendid palace for this new mega-powerful person. And how much will his salary be?

The minister talks about how there's going to be savings, according to KPMG, of hundreds of millions of dollars. The assumption is that the new mega-councillors, when they run for election next year — hopefully it never happens — are going to go door to door and say: "Elect me as mega-councillor. I am going to follow the dictation of Premier Harris and I'm going to cut \$850 million over three years out of Metro." If I'm running for mega-mayor — you can imagine them saying this — "Elect me as mega-mayor and I'm going to cut \$850 million out of Metro over three years."

On top of that, the news this week: "I'm also going to somehow, as a mega-mayor, be able to take care of housing." As you know, the minister yesterday mentioned 100,000 social housing units in Metro are going to be dumped on the property taxpayer. Public transit: hundreds of millions of dollars dumped on the property taxpayer. Welfare in Metro: dumped on the property taxpayer. Homes for the aged: dumped on the taxpayer. So this mega-mayor is going to go around and the mega-councillors are going to go around and say: "Oh, listen, elect me to Premier Harris's new megacity because I'm going to cut \$850 million. I'm also going to be able to absorb welfare. I'm going to be able to absorb social housing."

**Mr Silipo:** Long-term care.

**Mr Colle:** Long-term care. How is this mega-mayor ever going to be elected?



**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** Ambulance services.

**Mr Colle:** Oh, yes. He's also going to have ambulance services.

It would be interesting to see the election platform of the councillors or the mega-mayor who says he's going to do Mike Harris's bidding in the city. I want to see that mega-councillor or mega-mayor go to the doors in East York and say: "Vote for me. I'm going to follow Mike Harris's agenda in this mega-city and cut \$850 million." I want to see him go to the doors in the Annex, go to the doors in Parkdale and say, "I'm the one who wants welfare dumped on to your taxpayers, on to the property taxpayer."

I want to see him go to the barbershop on St Clair Avenue and say, "I'm the one who supports this dumping of transit on to your taxes at the barbershop, this dumping of welfare on to the small shopkeeper." The assumption this legislation makes is that the next council will do the mega-bidding. I wonder how they're ever going to have these so-called savings KPMG says they're going to achieve and who's going to do it for them.

Also, you can imagine, how much will it cost to run for mega-mayor? You may need, some say maybe \$1 million, some say maybe \$2 million, some say maybe they'll do the American-style campaign and they'll spend \$3 million to be elected. People talk about this is not a question of democracy. Who's going to be able to run for this position of mega-mayor? Most certainly it will be someone with a heck of a lot of money. It certainly will be someone who basically will be financed by the wealthiest Bay Street types or developer types. Who will the mega-mayor therefore be answerable to? To the little barbershop, to the little barber who gave him five bucks?

**Mr Gerretsen:** The mega-Premier.

**Mr Colle:** More than likely; certainly to the mega-Premier who will have his mega-slate running in the constituencies.

As to the cost of running for this thing, even for a councillor, what will the cost be? Some of you who may have been elected at the local level know — when I first got elected we spent \$3,000 or \$4,000, and got elected. Now, to run in Toronto, you will need \$50,000 minimum to run as a councillor. Who will be able to afford that? It won't be your little ratepayer person or your community activist. It'll be someone who either runs on a party slate or is independently wealthy. Ordinary people will not be able to afford it unless they get huge support from developers and special interests.

That is another problem with this type of city: The special interest groups — I'm talking about people with lobbyists — will have the most influence on this government, of a mega-nature. The little person who goes to East York city hall — if you go to East York, if you go down there right now, you'll see Mayor Michael Prue sitting there with one secretary. You'll probably be able to get your pothole fixed tomorrow. If you go to the city of York, the mayor's probably there right now.

If you go to North York, Mel Lastman is always lurking around North York and Mel Lastman is always available. Mel Lastman will phone you back himself and he'll go to the darn home himself sometimes and make

sure your snow is cleared. I want to see the mega-mayor do this. I want to see the mega-mayor go out and fix the pothole. You know what he'll say or she'll say? Well, you'll be on voice-mail. You'll never get through to them anyway, so forget it.

That is why people are so concerned. They're saying: "We will work with change. We will sit down and negotiate. Our elected officials should be part of it. The ratepayers should be part of it. Do what you did in Hamilton. Do what you're doing in Ottawa. We will work with you."

What is most upsetting is when they say that this government in Toronto has not worked. It has by no means been perfect and there have been a lot of problems. I've been at the municipal level, at the local, the regional, and we fought a lot of battles, but somehow with all the battles and all the wars we've had and all the problems, we've overcome — Mr Speaker, you come from a small community and you'll agree with me, I'm sure. I think your community is Listowel, if I'm not mistaken. You come to Toronto. I know a lot of members have said this is a beautiful city. It's been made beautiful because of councils which have cared. That's not to say every council is perfect. There are some awful councils, but there are some good ones. There are some good councillors and some bad ones, the same with bureaucrats.

1750

One of the lines in the propaganda is: "Well, Swansea and Parkdale and the Annex and Lorne Park have survived despite Toronto being made bigger" — because we had 13 municipalities once — "and the neighbourhoods are going to survive." They don't appreciate that the reason these neighbourhoods are so successful is because the city of East York and the city of Toronto took attention to detail.

My colleague from Parkdale was a city of Toronto councillor. He will tell you that if five people from Parkdale showed up at a committee meeting or a council meeting at city hall in Toronto, as big as Toronto is, they would pay attention to that. Those little things were taken care of. No matter how big or small your issue, when a ratepayers' group came to the city of Toronto or East York or North York, they knew they were going to get their councillor, a commissioner, maybe even the mayor to work on their problems. That is why the neighbourhoods of North York, the neighbourhoods of Toronto, the neighbourhoods of Scarborough and the neighbourhoods of York have survived, not because of big government, not because of Queen's Park or the federal government; they've survived because the cities paid attention to the little people.

This big mega-government is not going to be able to do that, because if you look at the track record of mega-governments, they don't work. Los Angeles is one example of a mega-government. I ask you, do you want to live in Los Angeles? New York City is another mega-government. I say to those who are trying to shove mega-government down our throats, why don't you go live in New York City, go live in Los Angeles? In fact, somebody said to me that maybe the best thing they should do is: "Move the capital to North Bay and leave us alone here in Toronto. Don't mess with our city."



This is what people are saying: "Why do you have to make us into a Los Angeles?" We do not want to be like Los Angeles here. We've learned from the American experience. We are close to Detroit, we are close to Buffalo, we know the mistakes our American cousins have made. We've learned from those mistakes. In fact, Toronto is always modelled as the way to do it and Los Angeles as not the way to do it.

What we've got here is a government that's saying, "We've studied this thing thoroughly and we've decided we want to make you like Los Angeles." How can this make economic sense? From a municipal governance sense, it is not substantiated. All the reports the minister alludes to, even his own Burnham-Shea report, go through that. See how many people recommended a megacity in his own Burnham-Shea report. Not one recommended a megacity. If you go through Golden, Minister Leach's own Trimmer report, no one ever said, "Go to this megacity."

If you look at the academic research, they all concur with one thing: When you amalgamate on this scale, you drive costs up. What happens is that bigger government becomes more inefficient, it becomes more bureaucratic and it becomes distanced from the people. That's what happens. Government is more effective and efficient when the people have a say, when the people can knock on the door of the councillors, the bureaucrats. What this will do, undoubtedly, is dramatically change the nature of our political atmosphere, our political heritage here in Toronto.

It was interesting the other night at Holy Trinity Church. There was an actor who came. He was dressed as William Lyon Mackenzie. I think his words were quite prophetic. He said: "In 1837 we stood up to the family compact. This family compact tried to dictate and dominate the people of Toronto back in 1837." That's what we're back to. We've got a small little clique in the Premier's office that somehow invented this megacity monster.

In the Globe yesterday, Michael Valpy was searching for the Machiavelli who concocted this madness. They're trying to find out who would be mad enough to concoct this megacity because no matter where you look, as I said, in all the research there is nobody who advocates megacity as an answer to the problems of Toronto.

There have been advocates of varying degrees of amalgamation. There have been advocates of a greater Toronto area. There have been advocates of changing the size and shape. But there has been nobody who has quantified or recommended this kind of nonsense. It is a sham. Essentially, it's a fraud being perpetrated on the people of Toronto who've paid millions of dollars in taxes, who've invested in their schools, in their neighbourhoods, in their parks, in their community centres. For a government to come along and say that this Los Angeles solution to Toronto is going to solve the problem is an insult to the commitment of the taxpayers, to their dedication to their neighbourhoods, their dedication to their city.

These people in Metro, whether it be in East York or in North York, feel that they have had some pretty decent success here in Toronto, that they've come a long way from a city that maybe 20 or 30 years ago was going to go the American way. They saved it from the brink and you've got this fantastic place. Now you've got Mike Harris and Al Leach saying, "We're going to ruin that." That's what they're saying.

With this megacity stuff on top of the dumping of welfare, the dumping of social housing, the dumping of transit, they're going to make this into — talk about the hole in a doughnut — the mega black hole if they go with this megacity nonsense and this dumping of all these provincial responsibilities on the city that is the heart of Canada in terms of the economy and culture.

Why would you be so mad as to tamper with and risk the success story with this thing that doesn't even have substantiation from the right or the left? It comes, as I said, right out of the Middle Ages, right from Machiavelli. I think that's where this comes from. Pure machiavellian deception. That's the root of this legislation. That's where it comes from.

I can continue the next day, I guess. I forgot to mention, Mr Speaker, that perhaps I could share some of my time the next day with my esteemed colleague from Parkdale, and excuse me for not mentioning it at the beginning, if I could have unanimous consent for that.

**The Acting Speaker:** We'll do that tomorrow. We're going to adjourn. It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1759.*

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of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
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(Hansard)**

Thursday 16 January 1997

Jeudi 16 janvier 1997



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 16 January 1997

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 16 janvier 1997

*The House met at 1001.  
Prayers.*

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Cordiano moved private member's notice of motion number 34:

That, in the opinion of this House, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has caused considerable concern and anxiety among the residents of Metropolitan Toronto over the issue of municipal amalgamation; and since enhanced public participation in the decision-making process should be a requirement; the government of Ontario should stop its proposed municipal amalgamation of Metropolitan Toronto until the residents have had an opportunity to participate in a referendum on this issue.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Ed Doyle):** The member for Lawrence may proceed.

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** I am delighted to have put forward this resolution before this House to be debated today. I think it is incumbent upon this Legislative Assembly and all members of this House to recognize that the most meaningful thing we can be engaged in is the democratic principles we all uphold. For me, this resolution stands as a tribute to democracy because it asks this government to recognize the rights and the direct say of citizens about how they will be governed.

This resolution is not opposition for opposition's sake. What I am hoping we will do this morning and beyond is have meaningful debate. This is also not an effort to maintain the status quo, as has been suggested by some, by the Minister of Municipal Affairs. We recognize, and I think most people recognize, that the status quo is not acceptable, nor will it do. But I say to the members opposite, people right across Metro Toronto want to have a say. They want to have meaningful input into how they will be governed. There's a growing chorus of people who are coming out to public meetings, who are insisting that they be given a say.

I would also add, to the members of the government who are assembled here this morning, that you did not have a mandate to put this before the people of Toronto, to totally ignore their wishes. You did not discuss before the last election campaign as part of your platform that you were going to abolish the lower-tier governments of Metropolitan Toronto, that you were going to do away with local representation and you were going to do away with local governance. That wasn't something you discussed in the last election campaign.

I say to you it is your duty and your obligation to allow the citizens of this great city to have their say. That's why this resolution is being put before you today. People feel disenfranchised, people feel that they haven't been given an opportunity to engage their governments in proper debate and proper analysis and proper discourse. In fact your own discussion paper said as much: "Many people...feel disenfranchised by the process of modern government. Many don't believe government can work for them." Your discussion paper goes on to talk about how "Ontarians must once again feel like citizens with a stake in the public life of their province, rather than as spectators who pay the bills but have little say in deciding what government does." That's what you said in your discussion paper. That's what your government believes in.

I say to you that the idea and the use of referenda is not something that should be foreign to you; it's not something you should be opposed to. That's something you fundamentally believe in. You're basing this on your own principles.

You go on to say in this paper: "Our concept of governing arises from a strong belief in individual choice, collective stewardship and distributed responsibility for the future. In other words, we believe that individuals should decide their futures. In turn, the function of government should be to serve and facilitate those aspirations, not to rule or constrain them."

You're contradicting yourselves, because you refuse to acknowledge that there will be referenda taking place in Metro Toronto, duly established and created under the auspices of Bill 86. The form the referenda will take is not so important as long as it complies with the legislation that has been approved by your government. Every municipality across Metropolitan Toronto is doing that. They're using different methods to conduct their referenda, but they're all within acceptable limits. They're all within the acceptable parameters of the legislation that you put forward, Bill 86.

It is hypocrisy for the minister to suggest he'll completely ignore the results of the referenda when they believe in referenda. It is your government, it is your party that talked about them in principle. How can you refuse the people of this city their say and then talk about the use of referenda and make it meaningful? You can't do that.

I call on the backbenchers of this government in particular to deal with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the rest of the cabinet ministers. Make them understand that what they're doing is wrong, that it is fundamentally unprincipled.

Furthermore, I don't believe it's acceptable that this government use time allocation in committee with respect



to hearings. There are some 500 groups or individuals that want to be heard on this matter right across Metropolitan Toronto, and it's obvious you're not going to accommodate all of them. This government is trying to ram this legislation through without proper debate, without proper consideration for what the citizens of this province have to say to the government of this province, so I think it's important that the members of this government, the backbenchers, implore their cabinet ministers to listen to the wishes of the citizens of this great city.

Finally, I will talk about the alternative, because the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is fond of getting up and saying: "Well, referenda won't work, because there is no alternative. What you want is the status quo." That's not the case. I think, as I said in my opening remarks earlier, that the status quo is not acceptable.

1010

How did this government come to the option that it's chosen? They've refused to listen to advice from experts. The Golden report, a lengthy document which fully studied the question of what is to happen to greater Toronto, recommended against the abolition of lower-tier government. In fact the option contained within the Golden report is the alternative: Move to having a GTA council with local-tier governments still involved in what decisions are being made. So local governance was not something that Golden recommended doing away with. In fact neither did the Crombie report and neither did the Trimmer report, which the Minister of Municipal Affairs was part of. He's completely rejecting what was said then and he was a part of that report, so he's contradicting himself.

The government has also refused to look at the experiences of other amalgamations in cities such as New York, Halifax and London. In fact this megacity proposal is one of the least-studied options. As is well documented now, this option will not cost less to run. Wendell Cox, who did a study, said, "The theoretical savings will never be achieved," the theoretical savings that are to come from the megacity.

I ask this government, where did this option come from? We'll have a decrease in accountability. This will lead to greater taxes, as has been demonstrated this week and noted by the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. I quote from their press release: "A single Metro Toronto government will be more costly, leading to higher taxes. It will result in lower service" and make Metro "less competitive and...stifle innovation."

I say to the government members, the backbenchers, where did this option come from? It doesn't add up. It's not the preferred option of all the sound studies that have been done. The Golden report, the Crombie commission, the Trimmer report, all of the various studies have shown you not to do this. In fact when you dumped welfare costs on to municipalities, Crombie said, "Don't do it," and you did it.

The option is to give the citizens of Metropolitan Toronto their say. That's what we're asking for today in this resolution.

I'd like to conclude by saying that the strength of any democracy is measured by a government's willingness to allow dissenting voices their fullest expression. This

government has a moral obligation to ensure that the citizens of Metro Toronto have their say. I implore this government, I implore the backbenchers to go to the cabinet and suggest to them that they not move ahead with their legislation to amalgamate Metro Toronto until the referenda have been held in Metropolitan Toronto.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Further debate?

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** I'm pleased to be able to rise today and speak in support of Mr Cordiano's resolution, and I want to say to you very clearly that all of our caucus, whether we're members from Metropolitan Toronto or throughout the province, are in support of this resolution and are in support of stopping what Mike Harris and Al Leach are doing in imposing the megacity plan in Metropolitan Toronto. We are absolutely clear about the need to do that, as citizen after citizen, individual and group have outlined the problems that are going to come about as a result of the imposition of this megacity.

We'll have a chance, as we go through the debate of the bill, to amplify those views, but I'm only going to speak for a couple of minutes this morning because I know some of my colleagues also want to have a chance to speak to this. I just want to point out that aside from how ridiculous this whole approach of the Tories is, what we have is a complete affront by Mike Harris and Al Leach towards any semblance of the democratic process in this province.

We see Mike Harris heralding himself as the person who maintains his promises, as the person who keeps his promises. We know that on this issue there has been a significant flip-flop, that there has been a significant turnaround in the position they are taking now from the position they took prior to the last election. That's a phrase that I wasn't the one to use. That comes from the co-chair of the same report from the task force on the governance of Metropolitan Toronto and the GTA that Al Leach and Joyce Trimmer and Derwyn Shea and Morley Kells and, according to Joyce Trimmer herself, with the support of one Dave Johnson, all coauthored prior to the last election.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** What did they promise people?

**Mr Silipo:** What they promised people in 1995, before the last election, was that they would not touch the local municipalities in Metropolitan Toronto because they believed in local government, they believed in the effectiveness of local government. Yes, they wanted to make changes, and yes, people believe we need to make changes. I haven't heard anybody in this debate really seriously defend the status quo. We certainly don't defend the status quo. We certainly are not saying, "Don't make any changes."

But the way in which these changes are being made, first and foremost, particularly because the result we are seeing is an imposition of a decision against any process whatsoever in Metropolitan Toronto, contrasts very clearly with what this government is prepared to do in the surrounding 905 area, where it's prepared to have a process in place, as it should. We are saying that it's important, it's crucial indeed, that this process also apply to Metropolitan Toronto.



We know there is a referendum on the way, and it's interesting. Just the other day the Minister of Municipal Affairs was mocking the fact that the referendum in Metropolitan Toronto is taking place in a variety of ways, through mail-in ballots in some places, through the traditional way in other places, through a phone-in ballot process perhaps in North York. He was mocking that, and yet it was only weeks ago when he brought in Bill 86, which outlines all those possibilities as alternatives to the traditional way of voting. Then he was praising them; now that people have taken advantage of them as a way to curtail the cost of a referendum, he's against them. Well, he knows that the referendum process is taking hold.

We saw a great indication just the other evening when Mel Lastman, the greatest reader of political winds I've seen at the political level in many years, has finally come back on board in support of the referendum. That tells me that people are beginning to understand what's going on here, and Al Leach has got to be shaking in his boots.

You know what I think is going to happen? We will know this only minutes from now, because later this morning there is an important meeting of our House leaders. We will see there what the plan of this government is, whether it is going to be arrogant enough to actually try and ram through this bill before the referendum process takes place. Let me say to you that if that's the intention, then what you've seen so far is nothing compared to the kind of opposition and the kind of battle you're in for across this great metropolis, because yes, at the end of the day, you have the right to make the decisions that you have, but you do not have the right to trample upon the democratic process.

You cannot in one place be praising the virtue of referenda, wanting to get on with establishing a law on referenda, and here, where it counts the most, where there's an immediate need, where there's an immediate use of referenda that would be appropriate and necessary, say: "Don't bother doing it. It's not going to make any difference. We don't care. We've already made up our minds." That's not the way in which good government works, and it will come back to haunt you if you continue to stay on that. That's why I as an individual and we as the NDP caucus will be supporting this resolution presented today by Mr Cordiano, because it expresses very clearly the need to oppose what this government is doing.

1020

**Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South):** It's my pleasure to speak to the motion as presented by the member for Lawrence. Let me just say that this side of the House is in favour of real democracy through real, binding referendums. We fully intend, given the acceptance of the opposition parties, to move forthrightly and quickly to have real, direct democracy in Ontario, perhaps for the first time in its history.

I'd love to support the honourable member's resolution in its entirety, except for the events that have occurred over the last few weeks in Metropolitan Toronto, which have made a mockery of real democracy, of the need for binding citizens' initiatives in referendums.

The honourable member raised what he thought were some points of hypocrisy. As a member of the legislative committee that was reviewing binding referendums and other tools of direct democracy, my head was spinning, because it was like being in an alternative universe. Coming into the House, I'd hear the member for Lawrence and the member for Oakwood and others demanding real referendums for the people of Toronto, and then I'd walk across the hallway, into another chamber of this august building, and I'd hear Liberal members denouncing the government's plans, denouncing real, binding referendums.

I know that's shocking for you, but I actually have the Hansard. Let me quote from the honourable member for Windsor-Sandwich, Sandra Pupatello:

"The issue of referenda is simply an opportunity for the majority government to move the decision-making and the difficult part of governance on to a very simply asked question through the process of referenda, and that is something the Liberal Party cannot support."

She said that. I know this is shocking, but I thought I'd bring it to the attention of the folks back home watching.

She went on to say: "People will not take the time to see all the implications when they vote yes or no on a given proposal. They'll simply look at the most simplistic one because that is what's being made available to them."

We believe in the right to choose by the people of Ontario. We are quite convinced that they can make rational decisions if we have a real referendum process.

The choice for us and the choice for the people of Toronto is between real democracy, which we are pursuing as a government, and the unfortunate circumstances that are occurring within Metropolitan Toronto right now. Let me give you a couple of examples.

We would like to see true citizens' initiatives where the citizens demand a referendum on a particular issue, a binding referendum. What do we have happening in the six municipalities? We have six mayors sitting in a room deciding that they want to have a referendum on behalf of the people, they say, although the people haven't spoken on this through a petition, deciding what the question is, deciding how it's going to be funded, deciding how to count the ballots and deciding what positions they're going to take.

We have proposed, through the Legislative Assembly committee, a separate, independent commission that will ensure that the question is fair and neutral.

**Mr Bisson:** You know the Premier shouldn't make those decisions either. How dare the cabinet get together and make those decisions. Terrible.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Cochrane South, come to order.

**Mr Clement:** They are deciding what the question is. We have suggested that an independent commission should fairly administer the referendum. They want to administer the referendum themselves. We have suggested that there should be a fair discussion of the issues through an independent commission. They are not only setting the question; they are funding one side; they are on one side of the issue.

"Where did this happen before?" you may ask. This happened before, in 1994, within the city of Toronto,



where the city of Toronto wanted to place a question on the referendum ballot on market value assessment. Not only did they want the question on market value assessment; they also wanted to pay the cost of the side opposed to that particular issue. Let me quote from the city solicitor at the time, Mr Perlin, who said that this suggestion by Toronto city council "goes much too far for what a council can do directly. It is not presenting the electorate with an informed choice." His view was: "It would be illegal" — not my words, his words — "for the city to engage in such a lopsided presentation of the issue. Council should not be telling the electorate what the answer should be."

**Mr Silipo:** What has that got to do with whether you are in favour or opposed to this? Come on Tony, get off it.

**Mr Clement:** He said that. This seems to be a recurring theme within the city of Toronto, a theme that we cannot accept because we believe in real democracy, direct democracy. That is the future of Ontario; it is the future of public choices.

**Mr Silipo:** "We believe in real democracy, but not today." Come on, Tony.

**The Acting Speaker:** Would the member please come to order.

**Mr Clement:** The future of democracy in our province is to have these choices, the choices that matter to the people of Ontario, being decided directly by the people of Ontario if either the government or citizens through a petition think it's appropriate. The future of democracy in our province is not Toronto spending \$1.6 million, Etobicoke \$250,000, Scarborough \$75,000, East York \$90,000 and York \$200,000 to present one side of the issue and to determine the question on behalf of the people they are supposed to represent. We favour real democracy for Ontario, not the pathetic sham that the member for Lawrence is suggesting is the future.

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** I find this astonishing. Here's Mr Referendum from Brampton South opposing a fundamental exercise of a democratic right in Metropolitan Toronto. This is what the two and a half million people, the citizens and taxpayers of Metro, are most afraid of. They know this government is denying them the right to have a say in the future of their community, of their cities.

This is a government that before the election said, "We are going to sponsor more referenda." But you can see what the plan is here: When it suits them, they'll support a referendum. In this case it doesn't suit them because this government is systematically trying to deny duly elected councillors and the taxpayers of Metropolitan Toronto the right to have a say in their future. If anything more fundamentally undemocratic has ever happened before in this city, show me. This is what it's all about.

The government belittles referenda. Minister Leach and Premier Harris said, "In this case we won't even listen to the referendum." They claim the referendum is too expensive, too complex for the citizens. What an insult to the intelligence of the voters of Toronto, saying it is too complex to vote on it. They say it is too expensive, yet this is the same government that is spending eight million taxpayer dollars on propaganda, trying to ram their mega-

city down the throats of the citizens of Metro. What hypocrisy. They say it's too expensive to give people a vote, yet they'll spend \$8 million trying to brainwash people into believing that this eradication of democracy in Metro is justified. If there is anything that should be upsetting to everybody across Ontario, it's this denial of democracy here in Toronto. That is what is most upsetting.

I say to people, look beyond what this government is trying to do. Don't be intimidated by them. Don't be intimidated by the mega-press either. I encourage you to support the brave people who are fighting this tyranny. That's what it is. I would ask you to support people like Mayor Lastman, who finally said: "Enough is enough. I'm going to stand up to this government." I say to people, support anyone who will have the guts to tell Mike Harris and Minister Leach that they're wrong. Support people who will stand up for the principles this country is founded on.

You may agree or disagree with the megacity, but no one in this chamber should disagree with giving someone the right to have a say on it. This is not about boundaries, this is not about politicians; this is about whether the citizens of this city have the right to have a say in their future. Those of you who don't care about Toronto, who don't care about boundaries, who don't care about the mayors or the bureaucrats, care about that. If this tyrannical denial of the right to have a say succeeds here, where will it stop? It's as simple as that, and that's the fundamental thing we're trying to say.

The members on the other side say, "This member said this and so-and-so said that." That is just camouflage, because their own party went door to door saying, "We're going to support referenda." Their own party went door to door saying they were going to support local government. They've made a complete reversal and are denying people the right to say that. That's what's a referendum is supposed to be all about: when a government changes course from what its intended position was.

1030

They have the gall to say that in this case they won't support it. I'll tell you why they won't support it. They're afraid of giving people the right to have a say because with the referendum there will be a debate and the facts will come out and people will see that this megacity madness will dump hundreds of millions of dollars in social services on Metro. It will destroy the city that the people of Toronto and East York and Etobicoke, North York and York and Scarborough made one of the greatest cities in the world.

I tell you out there, join the fight to give people a right to be heard all across Metro. This Monday night, join the growing number of citizens who are rising up against this government. There will be a couple of thousand people at the Metropolitan United Church Monday at 7 o'clock. I urge you to go and support people who are fighting for democracy and stop this government from ramming through this legislation which denies essential democratic rights and principles of participation in their cities. Rise up against the tyranny this government is imposing on two and a half million people. Don't allow it.



**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** I'm very pleased to be able to join in this discussion and speak in favour of the resolution presented by the member for Lawrence. I recall a couple of weeks ago when we were discussing this very matter that I was saying we should be opposing the demagoguery of this government against Metropolitan Toronto because it speaks to some of the fundamental principles people are raising in Metropolitan Toronto. We've got demagoguery in Metro and we've got democracy in the 905 region.

The reason we've got democracy in the 905 region is because this government has a great deal of public support there. They don't feel they have the same support in the 416 area, so they're creating a situation where they're going to dump, harass, intimidate and hurt all the people of Metropolitan Toronto. We've got omnipotence for the 416 area and we've got discussion and facilitation of democracy in the 905 area. They are forcing amalgamation in Metropolitan Toronto but in the 905 area this government says: "We're not going to do that to you. We're going to hire a facilitator to assist you in the democratic process to amalgamate." We've got two sets of processes and democracies going on, and they're not fair for us in Metro as they are for the people in the 905 area.

Moving on to the issue of referendums, this government, this Tory-Reform government, loves referendums. We know that. Yet when it comes to dealing with the issue we have in front of us, they say, as M. Leach said just a couple of weeks ago: "Oh no, this is too complicated an issue to have a referendum on. We can't have a referendum on this issue where it's a simple yes or a no. It's too complicated," he says. M. Clement from Brampton South, giving another reason altogether, says, "Oh no, this is not a real referendum, and therefore we oppose it."

What you'll find from this government is that from one day to the next, they provide different rationales for why they can't support it. It's a shifting amoeba we've got on the other of this chamber. They will invent all sorts of different reasons to oppose this. We're saying to M. Bennett from Brampton South, if you really want this real referendum to happen, give people a chance. Give us the six months you are talking about and give people in the Metro community the opportunity to have that real referendum, Mr Bennett. Give it to them. Don't stop it.

**Mr Peter L. Preston (Brant-Haldimand):** Mr Bennett?

**Mr Marchese:** Mr Clement. I apologize.

**Mr Bisson:** He thinks of the bad old days under Bennett.

**Mr Marchese:** A real connection indeed, but I apologize.

So, Mr Clement, member for Brampton South, if you want a real referendum, give them the opportunity. Don't present this bill in a way that prevents those people from having that very real opportunity you want to give them. Stop it. Give them the six months.

What we have here in Metropolitan Toronto is a groundswell of democracy. We have never seen week after week where you have 300, 400, 600 people going to meetings. A growing democracy is what you are witnessing here, Mr Clement, and it's a groundswell. The numbers are numerous. You cannot deny that. You can't hide that. These people are fighting for democracy. These

people are worried about losing that opportunity to participate once you amalgamate, as you have said you will do. You have said you're going to disregard that referendum once it is held. In my view, in whatever form it is being held, it is important for you to listen to it. For you in advance to say you're going to disregard that referendum is a shameful act of demagoguery and not democracy in this place.

The people of Metropolitan Toronto, not just Toronto, fear they're going to lose their voice in a government of 2.3 million people. They're going to lose that democratic possibility that they've been able to nurture in places like Toronto. They're going to lose that possibility to participate in shaping what a city should look like. Because once you have this great metropolis of 2.3 million people — it is huge — you're going to have a mayor with tremendous power governing a budget of \$10 billion: huge. It won't be easy for the little people in East York and the other people in North York and Etobicoke to say, "We'll trek down to Toronto," if this is where that new seat is going to be. It won't be easy. Access will be difficult, democracy will be difficult, and participation will be limited. The people who are going to these meetings know that. That's why this democracy is growing, and you're witnessing it every Monday.

When you see the people in the next meeting at the Metropolitan United Church, you will not see 600; you will see those numbers grow. They're afraid of this lunatic ideology of this government. They're afraid of your lunacy. You've just announced in this past week the taking out of \$5.4 billion out of the property taxes for education, and you didn't provide relief for people. What have you done? You substituted that cost by dumping a whole lot of other services on municipalities: day care, long-term care, welfare, ambulance. You've dumped libraries now; you won't share that cost with them. Transportation. You've dumped all of these things on municipalities, and Metropolitan Toronto is going to be hurt by that.

You've passed areas of responsibility that are properly contained and should be properly managed by the province, not the municipality through the property tax. You are forcing people to pay for essential services out of the property taxes. We have an ability by the province to raise money to pay for those essential services, and what you've just done is you've shifted an incredible responsibility of essential services on to municipalities to raise from property taxes.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Marchese:** This is lunacy. These members here are lunatics. That is why these people are coming to these meetings in great numbers, because they see that what we've got here is symbolic of everything that is evil in this province. That's why they're coming to the meetings, because they're afraid of what's going to happen to our province and to our municipalities.

As some members here have said, we urge the people of Ontario to be as loud as the members from the government are now in their reaction to my responses. You need to be as loud as you can for your voices to be heard now, not once this thing has passed. Once they amalgamate,



the game is over and you won't be able to come back and say: "When did these lunatics do this? We didn't know." This is the time for you to write to the Premier on a note, a letter, "Private and Confidential," so it gets to his little fingers, "Private and Confidential," so they see it. Write a letter to Minister Leach, "Private and Confidential."

1040

Come to this House next Monday where we're going to have an opposition day on this very matter to deal with this very issue. Come and show yourselves and raise your voices against this evil and the lunacy of this reform-minded government.

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** If there's any lunacy, I think it was the years from 1990 to 1995 when we saw massive deficits in this province by the NDP.

It gives me great pleasure to rise today as the member for Scarborough Centre to debate ballot item 55, a resolution by Mr Cordiano, the member for Lawrence, calling for a referendum on the issue of the creation of the new city of Toronto.

A single city, a unified city of Toronto, will save money, will remove barriers to growth and investment and will help create jobs within the entire GTA region. Residents, taxpayers and businesses will all benefit from one Toronto. It will reduce duplication and overlap. Local government will become streamlined, more accountable and more efficient.

A recent study by the KPMG accounting firm shows savings of up to \$865 million over the first three years and an additional \$300 million each year thereafter. Now, \$300 million is approximately the annual operating budgets of Scarborough and East York combined. Already within Metropolitan Toronto today, 72% of all municipal spending goes towards services that are delivered across Metro through the regional government. In other words, of all the budgets of Scarborough, Toronto, North York, East York, York and Etobicoke, 72% of all spending is for amalgamated services. So we're not going from zero to 100; we're already at a starting point of 72.

Within Metropolitan Toronto and the six member municipalities, there are almost 180,000 bylaws on the books, differing bylaws from municipality to municipality. One bylaw in particular in my riding that has come up recently is the fact that fur trapping is allowed within the city of Scarborough.

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener):** Fur trapping?

**Mr Newman:** Fur trapping. The city of Toronto says, "No, you cannot fur trap in the city of Toronto." Scarborough is now going to be passing a bylaw that outlaws fur trapping within its boundaries. I think a single government within the new city of Toronto will make it easier for all citizens to know what the bylaws are.

Services can be delivered at less cost and improved at the same time. For example, North York is the only municipality within Metro that still offers twice-weekly garbage pickup. It also delivers this service at the lowest cost per household of any of the local municipalities. A unified city will take the best practices from Metro and from around the world and use them to deliver good local services for the best price.

There are various ways of gauging the views of your constituents on any issue, and this issue is no different. We can look at the number of letters that we receive, the number of phone calls, the discussions that we have with our constituents not only in our offices but within the community, including town hall meetings. More people have contacted my office this year regarding the fur trapper than regarding amalgamation of the city of Toronto.

With respect to the referendum, what will the question be? Will it be the same question across all six municipalities? How will the vote be conducted? Today, as I start my day every day by reading the Toronto Star to see what I'm up against, it says on the editorial page, page A20, that in Toronto the voters will get a ballot they can mail back. The cost is \$1.62 million, comprised of \$955,000 to conduct the vote, \$450,000 for publicity against the megacity, \$200,000 of intervenor funding to be disbursed by councillors in their wards for campaigns, and \$20,000 to a group already opposing the merger. But nowhere does it say here that there's any money for groups that are in favour of a merger. No money. So it appears to me that the city of Toronto wants to skew the results of its referendum.

In Etobicoke they're having a plebiscite over three days, with a limited number of polling stations — cost, \$250,000; in the city of Scarborough, where I'm from, a mass mailing of ballots anyone can cast at selected locations or return by mail, or vote by fax or e-mail — cost, \$90,000, and it goes on and on.

Will a decision be considered if it's a 50% majority or a 60% majority or is it 66⅔%? Will it require a certain percentage of eligible voters to vote? Will it be decisive if only 10% of the voters even bother to vote? I mentioned that the city of Scarborough has voted to have a mail-in referendum. How are the abuses, such as multiple voting, going to be controlled? It's been suggested by some that the ballots will be signed and checked against the voters list. What happened to the idea of democracy by secret ballot? How would you ensure those are the only ones who are allowed to vote?

I know the member for Lawrence now says he feels strongly about this issue, but I ask him how he voted in 1992 for Mr Turnbull's private member's bill entitled the Provincial Public Consultation Act which called for referendums across Ontario. If the member for Lawrence believes so strongly in referendums, why didn't he stand up and demand a referendum on the 65 tax hikes that Ontarians had forced upon them from 1985 to 1995? Why didn't he stand up to demand a referendum on whether Ontarians wanted the massive deficits of the previous NDP government? Our government supports referendums. We are the government that will finally bring forward referendum legislation in Ontario.

Much has been said about a single unified city of Toronto. I'm going to finish my presentation with one last quote, that of Frank Jones from the Toronto Star of January 6: "I won't be wasting my time voting in the March 3 referendum on amalgamation — if the vote ever comes to pass. It is a scandalous waste of millions of dollars and a fraud besides, perpetrated by politicians desperate to hang on to their perks and power." Quite frankly, that's how many people feel about this issue.



**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** I'm delighted to have the opportunity to speak on this resolution. The bottom line is that the resolution is saying, "We want the people to have a say"; what this government is saying is, "We don't want the people to have a say." The resolution is pretty plain and very clear.

If these government people are going back in history, I think it was in 1918 that women got the right to have a say and blacks had the right to a say somewhere around the same time. Today we are asking for the people to have a say. Isn't it rather regressive that we've gone back to disallowing people to participate in democracy? This government is making sure it doesn't happen. As a matter of fact, we've gone back to surrogate times when we could appoint somebody outside the 2.3 million people. The Brampton South member will now speak on behalf of the people of greater Toronto. What a shame.

Today, with one of the most important resolutions coming through here, out of about 14 Conservative members who represent greater Toronto, we only have about three sitting in here. One had the opportunity to speak and the others will be shut up because they've been told by the surrogate father from Brampton South what to do: "There'll be no referendum." We will be looking.

I would have loved to see the members from greater Toronto speaking on behalf of their people so they could have a right to speak, to have a say. That's what democracy is about. Give the people a chance. Oh no, this bully government, with the dictatorial way it conducted itself with Bill 26, is going to ram it through. Mike Harris said openly, "I am going to ram this thing through, because I have my way or no way."

Let me tell you and let the people here know they have a right to stop this kind of bullying, this kind of dictatorship. They can call all their members in the greater Toronto area and ask them, "Why is it you're not giving us a right to a say about our lives, about our children, about our seniors?" Why are you not doing this? If you are so proud about your bill, if you're so proud about your democracy, allow them to do that. You're so proud that you're spending almost \$9 million to tell the people, "My way." They're saying: "Just open up a bit. Let us tell you about our way."

It could be that their way will be your way, but you're scared, you're scared stiff. You're going to ram everything through within the time you have and to hell with the people. Let me tell you that the people will not stand for this. You can run, Mr Harris, but you can't hide. Many of you in Metro Toronto, you can run, but you won't hide because the people will speak very loudly and they will get you and I'm urging them all to call —

1050

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** They did last year.

**Mr Curling:** Of course they did last year, as you said, and they may be saying, "We have made a mistake." The newspapers are saying, "My golly, I thought they were on the right track. Dumping on the people like this." Mel Lastman thought it was right, then he said, "Oh my golly," when he started adding up how you have dumped. Give the people the chance to say because that's what democracy is all about, so that the people —

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** What about a referendum on tax increases?

**Mr Curling:** Of course, if they have no other way in which to express themselves through public hearings, then maybe we should have a referendum, because that's the last resort for this kind of dictatorship that goes on. Then let's have a referendum. I believe much more in fuller participation than a referendum, but if that's the only avenue, then we should go that way. I support this resolution right forward and I hope you all in greater Toronto support that.

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** Indeed, I think the rhetoric has reached a new high or a new low, depending on your perspective, in the chamber here today. The member who spoke most recently, the member for Scarborough North, has said it's important for people to have a say, and yet he himself knows that within Scarborough there have already been two comprehensive surveys, one done by the chamber of commerce sent out to every member of the chamber of commerce and 74% of the business people in Scarborough have said move to one city.

But better than that, Metro councillor Ken Morrish has sent out a survey to 30,000 households, by far the largest and most representative sampling of any of the so-called surveys we've heard of so far in the press. So far, as the member opposite knows, within Scarborough 88% of the respondents have said: "Go to one city. We want efficiency. We want lower taxes. We want to end the confusion." That's what the people of Scarborough have said and that's why we're reflecting that with this legislation.

The fact of the matter is that if you want to talk about the real hypocrisy, the bulk of the time spent by the Liberal Party here today defending the resolution of the member for Lawrence was from the member for Oakwood. Mr Colle said in 1982, "I think the borough should be disbanded" — he was referring to East York — "because we find our taxes are the highest in Metro and our services, if not the worst, are among the worst in Metro." He went on to say, "The boroughs of York and East York should be amalgamated, along with portions of North York and north Toronto, to form a new Metro borough called Greater York. We need some sort of amalgamation," Mike Colle, October 18, 1983.

Then: "York council turned thumbs down last night on joining Scarborough and North York to become an amalgamated supercity. A motion by ward 2 alderman Mike Colle was roundly defeated on a vote of 9 to 1 after a two-hour debate."

The hypocrisy and the insult to this chamber. There is a process. The people of this province can go to their MPP, they can come to public hearings and I challenge the members opposite to hold town hall meetings to find out exactly what the people think at no cost to the taxpayers.

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** I'm delighted to speak on the issue brought by the member for Lawrence. While I would support it myself, I urge the members to support it as well.

I will speak directly to the issue for the few minutes I have allotted to myself. It says that the "government of Ontario should stop its proposed municipal amalgamation



of Metropolitan Toronto until the residents have had an opportunity to participate in a referendum on this issue." That is very straightforward, very clear, and I don't there think should be any problem.

I won't repeat what has already been said, but I'm going to read some quotes from a document prepared for and on behalf of our Premier, Mr Harris. It is a document that I'm sure the members of the government side, especially the member for Brampton South, would like us to forget, as they have already forgotten it themselves. Let me read you what it says on behalf of the members of the House and the people of Ontario who are watching this debate. By the way, the document is entitled *Your Ontario, Your Choice*. This is the document the Premier of Ontario has presented to this House on behalf of the people of Ontario. It says, I repeat, *Your Ontario, Your Choice*. Let's see what the Premier says to the people of Ontario about wanting them to have a choice:

"We're looking at the possibility of government-initiated, opposition-initiated and citizen-initiated referendums.... We also feel — unlike other politicians — that referendums are a good idea and do not limit the ability to manage a government. We don't think it's unreasonable for people to have those alternatives."

That was Mike Harris in the *Financial Post* of February 4, 1995.

"Since taking office, Premier Mike Harris and the Ontario government have moved quickly to improve government accountability and increase public participation in the decision-making process. However, this is only the beginning.

"Among other reforms, the government believes that increased use of the referendum can serve the objectives both of greater accountability and of better public participation.

"This paper is merely the first step in an extensive public dialogue on the best way to incorporate the referendum — direct democracy — into our decision-making process."

It continues, and I would reserve my comments on the megacity for another time; this is too important today and I wish to address my comments directly to the issue.

"Mike Harris and the Ontario government believe that this must change. Government accountability to all taxpayers must increase. Public participation in government is both desirable and intrinsically preferable to 'capture' of the policy-making apparatus by special interest groups. Ontarians must once again feel like citizens with a stake in the public life of their province, rather than as spectators who pay the bills but have little say in deciding what government does." Isn't that wonderful?

"For many years, Mike Harris has made clear his support for direct democracy. He was one of the first Canadian political leaders of this era to argue forcefully that the referendum must play a greater and more significant role in our decision-making process."

This was Mike Harris. What happened today? We hear that the true people are the ones to decide. To my colleagues on the other side, to the member for Brampton South who says who the true people to speak on behalf of having a referendum are, are we saying that the mayor

of North York, the people of North York, the people of the city of Toronto and the various mayors are not real people, are not true people?

My time is up. I hope the government will support the bill as presented by the member for Lawrence.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Lawrence has two minutes.

**Mr Cordiano:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Firstly, I want to thank the people in the gallery who have attended this morning from far and wide to hear this debate, the city councillors and others.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm sorry, you can't address the gallery; you can address the members in the House.

**Mr Cordiano:** Mr Speaker, I thought you were being attentive; I was addressing you. I comment on that because I think it's important to recognize city councillors who have come here today and I'd like to thank them.

1100

Let me just conclude, as my time is running out, that what I've heard in terms of the responses from the government side confirms for me that there is ever so slightly a bit of contradiction going on here. The member for Brampton South is contradicting the member for Scarborough Centre in terms of the use of referenda.

It was also indicated that the chamber of commerce was consulted. Does that surprise us? That's exactly the point we're making. Consult the average citizen, is what we're saying. We know you have the ability to talk to the chambers of commerce across this province. That's not good enough. The citizen in this Metropolitan Toronto area wants to have a say. That's all we're asking.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs says: "Forget the referendum. It's irrelevant. I'm moving ahead no matter what. It doesn't matter what the result will be." That is making a mockery not only of the use of referenda but of democracy itself. When you have that kind of disdain for democracy, it concerns me. I plead with the backbenchers to implore your cabinet once again to allow for this resolution to take hold. Do it for your constituents' sake.

## JUVENILE DELINQUENTS ACT (ONTARIO), 1996

### LOI DE 1996 SUR LES JEUNES DÉLINQUANTS (ONTARIO)

Mr Jim Brown moved second reading of Bill 80, An Act to curtail Repeat Offences by Juvenile Delinquents / *Projet de loi 80, Loi visant à inciter les jeunes délinquants à ne pas récidiver.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** According to the standing orders, you have 10 minutes to make your presentation.

**Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West):** One of the greatest areas of current public concern is rising youth crime, and in particular violent youth crime. Each year, nearly one out of every 10 youths comes into contact with the police for a youth crime. The increased crime rates for the young have been much higher than they have for adults.

**The Acting Speaker:** Excuse me. Would you have those two rows cleared, please. There are no demonstra-



tions, silent or otherwise. Please clear those first two rows of the gallery.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member from Scarborough.

**Mr Jim Brown:** Mr Speaker, that demonstration blew a minute and a half of my time. I'd like to have that restored.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'll have to address that at the end.

**Mr Jim Brown:** Mr Speaker, I'm supposed to have 10 minutes. Can I seek unanimous consent to restore the time?

*Interjections:* Agreed.

*Interjections:* No.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm sorry. I'll ask you to proceed.

**Mr Jim Brown:** Just as with the first reading of the Juvenile Delinquents Act, the NDP voted against it, which must mean they support youth crime. They're now denying me my full time allotment. They're soft on crime; that's quite obvious.

There are lots of numbers for youth crime. Youth crime is four times the ratio of adult crime.

Last June, I returned from the third homicide scene in three weeks. It was 12:30 am. A young man, 17-year-old Michael Amann- Ewaschuk, had been stabbed to death and died at the Main Street subway station. It was traumatic for all of Michael's friends and relatives.

That same night, when I returned home, I had my own experience with youth violence. I thought my street was different; I thought it was safe. I called the Toronto Sun to discuss youth crime and the safety of our subway stations. While I was on the phone I heard smashing noises. My dog barked and I went to the window. There were several youths smashing my van. They were trashing my vehicles. Youth violence was at my front door. I yelled at them to stop and they shouted back profanity and threatened me. I called the police. In the meantime, I took my wife's car to go to the corner and see which way the gang went. I shouldn't have done that, as they surrounded my wife's car, punched the car and tried to get in. They took running jumps at both doors and kicked with both feet. They tried to smash the windows and they attempted to get me out of the car.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** Because they know who you are.

**Mr Jim Brown:** They didn't know who I was.

Never have I seen such violence, such hatred and such uncivilized behaviour. Those kids were out of control. It was mob rule. They were in a frenzy. Each was trying to outdo the other in violence. The police finally arrived and the kids ran off. This swarming occurred within two blocks of my house and the house of former NDP cabinet minister Anne Swarbrick. Our safe neighbourhood is a fallacy.

But my problems are nothing compared to the grief and agony of Mr Tom Amba. Tom's younger brother Louis was stabbed to death in May 1995. Louis was stabbed dozens of times, but the police stopped counting at 52. He is survived by his wife, Carol, and two young children, Megan and Guy. Louis's mom, 69 years old,

could only ask, "Did Louis suffer?" Tom began the Kid Brother campaign. He obtained nearly one million signatures. His attempts to get federal Justice Minister Allan Rock to change the Young Offenders Act were rebuked. He supports Bill 80. How can any one of the honourable members ignore Tom Amba, his message and the horror inflicted upon his family?

Then we have Michael Amann-Ewaschuk, a 17-year-old with so much promise, a good-looking, all-Canadian guy. Have you, as members, been to a funeral for a youth? Have you been to a funeral for a young person who was recklessly murdered? I have, and it was heart-rending. The murder was over a baseball cap. The kids sang a song for Michael at his funeral, Eric Clapton's *Would You Know My Name If I Saw You In Heaven?*, a song Clapton wrote for the tragic accidental death of his own son. I cried. Every time I hear that song I think of Michael. Michael is one of the catalysts for Bill 80 — tragedy, sadness, overwhelming sorrow. Classmates sobbed, not understanding death; but death was real, not a movie. I remain, today, saddened by the experience and I'll never forget it. *Would You Know My Name If I Saw You In Heaven?*

Willy and Patty Ewaschuk and Michael's girlfriend's mother, Joanne Stanton, are in the members' gallery today. I thank them for being here. Willy started the Stop the Madness campaign to reduce youth crime. Willy, Patty and Joanne are courageous, and we as members must remember that it is our duty to set laws and regulations that keep our streets and neighbourhoods a safe haven. It is up to us to try to prevent tragedies like the Ambases' and the Ewaschuks' from recurring.

That's why I introduced my bill, An Act to curtail Repeat Offences by Juvenile Delinquents. This bill is within provincial competence. The pith and substance of my bill has to do with maintaining safe streets and neighbourhoods. Property rights and civil rights are in the provincial domain. My bill is similar to the Highway Traffic Act, which tries to maintain safe streets for vehicular traffic. The Highway Traffic Act certainly falls under provincial jurisdiction. My bill, like the Highway Traffic Act, deals with safe streets as well, only without a motor vehicle.

My bill establishes provincial offences for minor infractions such as loitering, graffiti, petty trespass, vandalism and swarming, to name a few. Violation of such a provincial offence will result in a curfew from 10 pm to sunrise every day and from 9 am to 2 pm on school days for violators of a provincial offence. Each violation means a six-month curfew. Each violation also involves a fine, payable before the youth gets his driver's licence. Three strikes and you're out. Yes, three violations and the youth is denied provincial privileges for three years after they would normally be eligible. Provincial privileges such as obtaining a driver's licence, purchasing or consuming alcohol, gambling or buying a lottery ticket would be postponed for three years. If a youth is acting immaturely, they are obviously not ready to assume the responsibility for these provincial privileges.

Bill 80 does not impose a general curfew but just a specific curfew for the offender, not for all kids.



The exemptions to the curfew include youth who are travelling to or from work, accompanied by a parent or legal guardian, or for a medical emergency. Curfews from midnight to sunrise already exist for all Ontario youth under 16 under Ontario's Child and Family Services Act, 1990, totally constitutional. In the US, bylaws exist for a total youth curfew in 150 of the 200 largest cities: Phoenix, Dallas, Chicago, Denver, LA. In the United Kingdom, selective youth curfews have worked dramatically in reducing youth crime.

1110

Youth crime is indeed a large problem in Ontario and our constituents know it. The Young Offenders Act has been ineffectual. Justice Minister Allan Rock wrote to me on December 4 claiming that any legislation changes by the federal government will not reduce youth crime. Yet statistics indicate that arrest rates of 14- to 17-year-olds for homicides have tripled over the last three years; 65% of young offenders have been convicted before. Youth crime starts with simple, minor crimes like graffiti or loitering in a mall. Left unpunished, they graduate to vandalism, assault, break-and-enter and then to violence and even murder.

One youth in my riding was convicted of 20 break-ins and received five days' community work. That's not fair to the taxpayer, who foots the cost of the justice system, the cost of social workers who work with the youth, the cost of policing and the cost of legal aid. It's not fair to the youth either; letting them go unpunished for minor crime leads them on to more serious crime, all the while believing they'll go unpunished.

Bill 80 is an attempt to punish minor crime, to send a message to kids and to ultimately stop violent crime. The mayor of New York City has demonstrated that the attack on minor crime dramatically decreases serious violent crime. In 1982 an article in the Atlantic Monthly titled "Police and Neighbourhood Safety" postulated the "broken window" theory. That theory says that if a simple thing like a broken window isn't fixed, it's a sign no one cares. If minor crime is unaddressed and unpunished, it's a message that no one cares and that it's going to lead to more serious crime. New York City decided to attack the broken windows, or minor crime, and it's working. They've restored safety to their parks and subways, and a sense of security has returned.

Please support my bill so that Louis Ambas, Michael Amman-Ewaschuk, Ishmail Spence and far too many other kids will not have died in vain.

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** I'm pleased to rise in my place today to address this bill, and I'd like to start off by saying to the member for Scarborough West that I certainly have a lot of sympathy with what had happened to him and his family and the other victims of crimes that he has enunciated in this House here today. But I'd like to also say to him that quite frankly I'm surprised by the applause he received from the government members here, because I in my very best judgement, looking at this bill, thought he'd only get maybe five or six government members to support this. I'm really rather surprised that there is as much support for this as there is.

I would like to remind the member that in this country we have a criminal justice system, and while the member says that from time to time — and I agree — it is not working, our job here is to improve it by working with the system and working — an advantage that you would have over me — with our Attorney General and our Solicitor General to make sure that we do make it better. There are, I believe, some very positive things we could be doing to crack down on youth crime.

You could be reversing some of the things your government is doing, because you've mentioned rightly what New York City is doing. Cracking down hard on minor crime sends a signal to major crime, and you tend to pick up people maybe on the way to some major crime because the car wasn't in good shape, they had a driver's licence that wasn't timely etc. They are finding that they are reducing crime. That is one of the answers, to be increasing community policing, getting more of the men and women who are in our police forces in our communities on the streets, back in the neighbourhood. That's what they did in New York City and they had a tremendous decrease in criminal activity; up to 50%.

What saddens me about this is that because the member himself has been a victim of youth crime, he is using his position in the House here in what I think is a very vindictive way. I will say to the member how serious I think these freedoms that he's impinging upon are. You have to remember, when you start to look at these in total, that hundreds of thousands of men and women in this country laid down their lives in two world wars to protect this country from this sort of fascist legislation you're bringing forward here today. What you're doing is denying the freedoms of our —

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. I don't think that the term "fascist" is parliamentary and I would ask you to consider your use of it. I don't think it's in order.

**Mr Ramsay:** Mr Speaker, if you think it's out of order — I was referring to the tenor of the legislation, but I'll withdraw that if you think that's too much and say that I think it's totalitarian in its tenor, that it is denying people their freedoms and that we already have punished these people. In a criminal justice system we have punished these people; they have served their time.

To go back for something a youth did between the ages of 14 and 18 and say, "Now, up to 22 years of age you cannot drink or purchase a lottery ticket or play on a video lottery machine," I mean, what we're doing is saying, "Because you've made" — and I'm not saying that there are not young offenders out there who deserve to be punished and deserve to be punished harder and that our system is not working. But we need to work together and make sure that the laws are there and that the punishments are there and that the rehabilitation is there that is not there in the system as this government starts to cut down on those sorts of services in the jails. To go back and say, "You can't drink, you can't buy a lottery ticket," what kind of a country, a state, are we creating here because we feel at this time that youth are not being punished hard enough for the crimes they perpetrate?

We want to make sure that youth, if they got off on the wrong track, at least have the tools, such as a driver's licence, that might enable them to get employment, take



them out of isolation and get to visit family. To deny the privilege, as it is, because of something you did as a youth, so that you cannot drive a car until you're 19 years of age in this case, is extremely punitive and vindictive.

This is a very regressive piece of legislation. I cannot believe that the government members would be supporting this piece of legislation. I cannot believe that this type of legislation would pass in this House and I would hope that the Attorney General would also be talking to the government members of this House to say, "This is not the way to go about correcting a situation that certainly needs to be worked on." There's no doubt about that. I would no doubt say to this member that there is a problem here and what I think we should be doing is working on this. This is probably one of these ideal areas where you could strike an all-party committee, because there's no politics in this stuff, I'll tell you. Everybody has the same concerns as you do. This is something we could work together on.

But putting something forward like this, I just can't believe that this House would pass this this morning. I would say to the government members, please read this over very carefully. While there is a problem and we all want to fix the problem, I don't believe Bill 80 is the way to go about it.

**Mr Bisson:** On behalf of the New Democratic caucus, I'd like to make some comments with regard to the bill being introduced by the member for Scarborough West. I want to say first off that I think the member brings to this Legislature an issue that is real, an issue that affects many people, especially in urban communities — not specifically urban communities, but we do know that in some communities there has been an increase in violent crime. I would propose that it is not only youth in our society perpetrating violent crime, doing the actions that lead to violent crime, but it is also an increase across our general society.

I can tell you that in my community, the city of Timmins, we've seen acts of crime that have led to deaths on the part of many people above the ages of 18, 19 and 20, and in many cases those people taking part in those actions are 30, 40, 50 years of age.

The point I'm trying to make here, first of all, is that although I agree with the member for Scarborough West that there is a problem, I agree that government, both provincially and federally, should try to take some responsibility for the problem by trying to find solutions through a legislative process of trying to find ways to deal with reducing the number of crimes in our society, and I support generally what the member is trying to do. However, I guess what I want to say is that I very much want to support it, but as I read through the bill and took a look at it, and I'll listen to the debate further —

1120

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** You can make amendments after.

**Mr Bisson:** Maybe members can make comments after and clarify a couple of points, and maybe we'll be able to do that.

But when I look at the bill, I see there are humongous problems on how you would ever make this work. I

would really have appreciated it if the government could have had the Attorney General here today to speak specifically on these issues, because I wonder as a member how you would be able to enforce the provisions that you put into this bill.

Although you want to do something that I think is in the right direction — you're trying to respond to an issue that is real, you're trying to do something to represent your constituents, and I respect what you're trying to do — I look at it, and just to use as an example, it says, "A person who, based on conduct while under 18 years of age, has been convicted of two offences under the Criminal Code (Canada) or three offences found in the Criminal Code (Canada) or a provincial act is not entitled to consume or purchase liquor or to play games of chance in a casino operated by the Ontario Casino Corporation until attaining the age of 22 years." I just wonder, how would you enforce that? How do you enforce something like that? How does the casino operator or the employee at the LCBO determine who has been convicted of such an act and is subject to this particular legislation?

**Mr Peter L. Preston (Brant-Haldimand):** Like any other legislation.

**Mr Bisson:** Just permit me. I'm not demeaning what the member is trying to do; I'm trying to be helpful. You need to explain to me and to other members of this Legislature how this would work, because I wonder —

**Mr Murdoch:** Compliance.

**Mr Bisson:** Compliance, but how do you make it work? Just give me a moment to explain, and then if you guys can explain and tell me clearly how this works, maybe you've got something here.

For example, you convict somebody and somebody then has those particular privileges in our society removed. A young offender is convicted, is subject to this particular bill, and he or she has not the ability to go out and buy alcohol or to participate in games of chance until the age of 22. What do you do? Do you give them a piece of paper that they've got to carry around in their wallet when they walk into a gaming casino so that the people at the gaming casino or the LCBO say, "Can I see the card or whatever piece of paper proves that you've been subject to an act?" Do you do a registry where everybody in the province who works at the liquor control board or at the gaming commission plunks the person's name or social insurance number into a computer to have their name pop up so that they're not able to buy the booze or not able to participate in a game of chance? There are a lot of problems with that, as you can well imagine. The whole question of confidentiality and the whole idea of cost, of how you would set that up, is something I would like to hear the members opposite in the government benches respond to.

I don't mean to be provocative here, but do you brand these people? Do you say, "You've been convicted, so therefore we're going to brand you and now we're going to be able to tell who it is that walks into a liquor store who has been" —

**Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre):** How do you enforce a driver's licence suspension?

**Mr Bisson:** The driver's licence suspension is not a problem, and I'm going to speak to that in a second. But



on the issues of gaming and liquor, how are you going to be able to tell the difference as an employee when that person walks through the door, that they have had their privileges suspended because they have been involved in criminal actions? How can you tell?

On the question of the driver's licence, it's a lot easier to do. On the driver's licence, you can order a suspension just as we do now if you're caught drinking and driving or if you've had too many convictions against your driving record. That's fairly easy to do. I don't argue that one, and I can understand some logic, because as a young person of 16 or 17 years of age, driving is a very big privilege. I can remember as a young man growing up, as most young men and women at age 15, looking forward to the day of getting a driver's licence. I understand that as being a deterrent, and I don't argue with that. I understand it, and I'll tell you, if I was a 15-year-old and I was staring in the eyes about to get my driver's licence and I knew there was a chance I could not get a driver's licence until the age of 18 or 19, as in this bill, if I participated in acts of crime, that very well may be a deterrent to my being involved in a criminal action. I haven't got a problem with that particular part of the bill, and I want to say that.

But on the other actions, which are two thirds of what this bill is all about, on the question of participating in gaming and participating in the legal activity, after the age of 19, of buying alcohol, having those privileges suspended till age 22 will be very difficult, I think, for the government to enforce. I say to the member for Scarborough West, I don't think your Attorney General is going to support this legislation. I very much doubt, if this House this morning votes in favour of this bill, that the government, meaning the cabinet, is going to support your bill. That troubles me, because it's an issue where private members come to this House on Thursday morning to try to represent their constituents and there is a problem in trying to get private members' bills adopted, period, in this House.

Second, I don't think with the way this bill is worded around the question of the drinking and the question of gambling that you can get cabinet support. I would urge the member, and I'd be prepared to assist him in that, to try to work with members of his cabinet, particularly the Attorney General and the Premier, to find ways of maybe amending this legislation in some way that can be supported by the cabinet and by members of this assembly. I for one don't believe suspending somebody's privilege of drinking is going to be enforceable and is going to be able to be done in any kind of way that can make it stick. It is going to be very costly, and how do I justify to my constituents in Cochrane South and your constituents, I would put it, when we're cutting money in health care and education and other services, having to spend money to set up a registry to prevent young people from drinking because they've participated in a violent crime? I'd have a problem trying to square that with my constituents.

But there are other things we can do. I think the driver's licence one is not a bad idea. There are some problems with that, but I think we can get into a discussion to figure out how that works. The other thing that

possibly we're able to do is to take a look at where we have jurisdiction as a province, and look at putting in place programs of restitution. When a young offender or a person of my age — of medium age, of course; I'm not a very old person —

**Mr Preston:** Oh, yeah.

**Mr Bisson:** Some people have told me I don't look too old for my age — that I be made to pay back the damages to the people I have committed an offence against. The member for Scarborough West talked about where young people came and smashed into his car and kicked the doors and pounded on the windows. Those kids should be made to pay for the damages. Why should your insurance dollars and my insurance dollars have to pay for that? In the end, it means we all pay as a society.

I would say to the member opposite that it's something I think would be a good deterrent, to say we will put in place in Ontario, where we have jurisdiction, a program of restitution to the victims of crime. The government has moved somewhat in that direction in another area, but what I'm talking about specifically is the young kid or the 30-year-old who goes out and does damage, steals a skidoo and busts it, \$5,000 worth of damage — or a snow machine; I shouldn't use the brand name here. As it works now, the person will either get a conviction, for which they may have to serve probation if there's no previous offence, and guess who ends up paying the \$5,000? It's you and I, through our insurance premiums. It's costly to us as citizens and it lets the person get off virtually scot-free. Why don't we look at getting into a system that says: "You did the damage; you take the responsibility; you pay it back"? Yes, the insurance pays back the individual immediately, because I want my snow machine back if it's been busted, but have that individual pay back the insurance company the money that it cost. I think that would be a good deterrent.

I've always found as an individual raising my children — I've got a young woman of 19, my eldest daughter, and I've got a young girl of 14. I've found, as you, the most effective thing to do is to give them responsibility and to say: "Okay, you're big enough. You think you can take decisions for yourself. You think you know better than Mom and Dad and Grandma and Grandpa. Well, you make the decision. You're going to have to pay the consequences." Like you, my kids have turned out to be fairly responsible; I haven't had a lot of trouble. I've found one of the reasons why is that we've given them that responsibility. We've said, "You're responsible for your actions." So I think that's one of the things we can look at.

If the member for Scarborough West had come forward with a suggestion such as that, we in the New Democratic Party would have no problem supporting that. I think that would be a positive measure, I think it would be enforceable, and I think in the end it would go a long way towards affecting the problem that you're trying to bring to this House.

The other thing we need to address is the whole question of why our society is becoming more violent. Our society is becoming more violent for a number of reasons, which are not as complex as we think. One is that the whole entertainment industry is a problem. I



don't advocate censorship; I would not stand for that for one second. But we need to take into account that young people and older people alike are subject to all kinds of movies, television shows, radio announcements, you name it, that depict acts of crime as if they're something that's okay to do. I think we need to come to terms with that. A young person or an older person goes and watches a movie where somebody gets severely beaten up or killed and he gets all pumped up and runs out of the movie and then tries to act out what he's seen in the movie. That happens. I think we need to come to terms with that.

1130

The other thing, which is the bigger issue, is giving people a sense of hope. I was in Attawapiskat last week. For people who don't know where Attawapiskat is, it's north of Moosonee by some 200 miles up the James Bay coast. About 90% of the people in that community are unemployed. What do you say to those kids when they're 12, 13, 14 or 15 years old and growing up in a community like Attawapiskat, where there is no hope of getting a job? That's a big problem.

I was reading some writings of the kids inside the high school, and what some of them were saying really blew me away: "What do you do to spend the time?" "There's nothing to do. Most of all I want a job, and I want to be able to look forward to something in the future. I see no hope, so I do drugs." I think that's something we've got to come to terms with, and that's not easily done. I don't put the blame for that at the feet of the government. We were government for five years, you were government for 44, the Liberals were government for five years; it's something we've all had to face as political parties.

In a non-partisan way, we need to try to find somehow in this Legislature a way of restoring hope to people in our province so they can obtain employment, so they don't have free time on their hands to say: "What am I going to do today? Let's all get together and go down to the mall and see what happens." I would much rather see younger people involved in a good system of education so they're able to get the skills they need to get to the job they will have later on in life, to give them some hope so they know there is a chance of getting employment.

There was a time not too long ago, and members of this assembly across the way would know, when you grew up you knew you were going to get a job in the plant, or if you went to college or university you would be in a profession, and you had a job for life. It hasn't been that way for 10 years and that has greatly affected our society. There are many children and young people in our society who have virtually no hope for the future. They have a lot of free time on their hands and they're saying: "Lord, what am I going to do? Well, I think I'll maybe go hang out at the mall and see what happens."

They see the advertisements on television, they see the sneakers, at \$200, that they can't afford, so they go out and beat up the kid next door so they can get the kid's sneakers, or they go out and steal a snow machine or a car, whatever it might be. Those are societal problems that we have to deal with.

In the last minutes that I have I want to say to the member for Scarborough West that I respect what you're trying to do. You're trying to deal with what is a very

real problem of violent crime in our society. I only put to you that I understand you're trying to deal with one particular aspect of violent crime, which is crime perpetrated by youth, but I hope you're not saying it is only created by youth. There is violent crime committed on the part of many people in our society, youth and old alike.

There is a portion in this bill that makes a lot of sense: the point about the driver's licence. I think that's supportable. That's something that probably could be made to work with a little bit of effort. I really wonder how you're going to enforce the other parts of the bill: the suspension of drinking and the suspension of gambling. I think that will be very problematic to enforce, either expensive or very bureaucratic, something I know you don't stand for. I want to hear you respond to that.

Also, I would like to hear you respond to the point about how we're able to maybe bring this back in some way to deal with some of the issues I raised about finding some way of putting in place a program of restitution that makes individuals responsible for their actions. If you can make individuals responsible and ultimately pay for their crimes, if there's been damage done and there's a cost associated with it, I would argue that it will not eliminate the problem but it will severely limit the problem we're having in our society.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to debate on behalf of the New Democratic Party the motion brought forward by the member for Scarborough West.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. Further debate?

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** I'd like to comment with respect to Bill 80 brought forward by the member for Scarborough West. He's brought forward a social problem we all agree on: violence by youth and crime in our society today. Every day we open up the newspapers and we read about violence that has occurred by youth in our society. In fact it seems to be on the increase. Certainly all of us on all sides of the House are concerned with that particular issue.

Our government has asked Allan Rock, the federal justice minister, to amend the Young Offenders Act substantially. Our Solicitor General has asked Allan Rock to amend the Young Offenders Act substantially. All of those requests have gone unheeded.

I understand the member for Scarborough West bringing forth this legislation because of his frustration personally and in representing his constituents; however, I have a number of concerns with respect to the legislation and I believe it is going to have problems in the future. The bill is, I believe, fraught with problems and has a number of legal problems that we should consider. In the few minutes I have, I'd like to briefly discuss the constitutional problems, the charter problems, the policy problems and even the increase of power to police with respect to youth.

The constitutional problems: Although the province can legislate over health, safety and even crime prevention, there is a serious risk that this legislation would be construed by a court in pith and substance as an attempt by the province to legislate criminal law. There is no clear link between any of the restrictions that follow from



a conviction and the activity associated with that conviction at all. If a young person is convicted of assaulting his school mates in the school yard during the day, what has that got to do with a curfew to be imposed upon him at night? Similarly, if a young person is convicted of dangerous driving or even the provincial offence of careless driving, what is the connection between these offences and the legal requirement to attend school?

The legislation in so far as it pertains to Criminal Code offences could be construed as an attempt by the province to create harsher penalties than those imposed by the federal Young Offenders Act, and we believe this would make the legislation ultra vires. There are a number of charter implications that we would need to look at, specifically section 12 of the charter, section 15 of the charter and, I believe, section 7 of the charter.

Even if the legislation is considered to come within the proper sphere of provincial jurisdiction over law, there are a number of potential charter problems within the legislation. The legislation effectively penalizes people, not so much for what they have done but for what they are; in other words, young offenders. The curfew is not imposed as a special condition of probation by a court sentencing an offender for a specific offence; it is imposed automatically as a result of any conviction. It is therefore a kind of status offence. Status offences have been ruled by the Supreme Court of Canada as not being valid and have been struck down under the federal Criminal Code.

Section 12 of the charter, which is the right not to be subject to cruel and unusual treatment or punishment, for example — and I don't believe this is the intention of the member for Scarborough West. If a young person is convicted of illegal parking a number of times — in other words, a minor type of offence — or finds himself or herself subject to quite severe restrictions, their liberty could be entirely restricted.

There are a number of policy problems which infect a whole slew of pieces of legislation, some of which were referred to by the member for Cochrane South. I think all of those things need to be looked at before the bill proceeds any further.

From a criminal justice perspective, it should be made clear that a person who commits an offence is given a sentence for that offence. The aim of the sentence may be denunciation, deterrence or rehabilitation, but when that sentence is served, the offender has paid his debt to society and is entitled to be given an opportunity to become reintegrated into society. The young person who has damaged property, as a sentence paid restitution to the victim and performed community service work, should not be further penalized by the province through curfews or ineligibility to obtain privileges.

What I'm trying to say is that there is a clear overlap of provincial power by this bill, which I don't believe it has, with respect to the authority given under our Constitution to the federal government. I encourage the House to continue on with this issue, but I quite frankly believe this bill will lead to problems in the future in the courts. Unfortunately I am not prepared to support the bill because of those legal problems.

1140

**Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock):** I'm pleased to participate in the debate on this bill, Bill 80. Quite frankly, it's unfortunate that a bill like this is even necessary. Something in our society has changed over the past two decades. Many of us talk about the breakdown in family values. It has nothing to do with the fact that parents are working outside the home today. It has to do with responsibility and commitment to the welfare of others and ourselves.

What has happened is that young people, many of them still children themselves, care so little about themselves and others that they need to break the law in the first place, let alone reoffend. It used to be that when you got in trouble at school, you got in trouble at home. Now all too often teachers are called to task for something a youth did. It used to be that when you were picked up by the police, it was a serious matter. Now all too often it's the law enforcer who is called to task for a number of reasons. It used to be that parents were respected, and it used to be that parents could expect reasonable behaviour from their children. This bill may seem harsh but, first and foremost, Bill 80 provides for measures of enforced accountability following convictions, accountability and the loss of privilege that seem to be missing today.

Let's look at the facts: To be a young offender means that you have to have done something that resulted in a conviction under the Criminal Code of Canada or a provincial act. That means that somebody else's rights were violated in some major way. If all the youth gets is a slap on the wrist, what motivation is there not to offend a second or third or even a fourth time? How would we feel if our loved ones were hurt or our personal property damaged? How would we feel if our loved one was murdered by someone who had offended before and shouldn't have been on our streets?

It comes down to personal responsibility and having consequences for inappropriate and unlawful actions. Put another way, we need the punishment to fit the crime. There is simply no doubt about it: There is cause and effect in life; there have to be real consequences. It's time to realize that we have to go back to the notion that crime does not pay.

Bill 80 provides for such consequences. First, there's the curfew for individuals under 18 years of age from 10 pm to 6 am daily for a term of six months for a first offence and then 12 months for persons convicted of more than one offence. There's also the curfew for youth under 16 years of age from 9 am until 2 pm, when they should be in school. In my view, these types of curfews provide some structure in a youth's life that has the potential to keep them out of trouble and into something productive. It also says to young people that there are consequences to your freedom of movement.

Then there is the issue of the driver's licence. The bill calls for a delay in applying for a driver's licence if the youth offends on two separate occasions while under the age of 18. They must wait until they are 19 years of age to apply. All of us in this House who have children know that as soon as they turn 16 they want to apply for the driver's licence — it's a rite of passage in our society — so curtailing the process could have definite consequences



and could be a way of keeping youth away from the wrong company and the possibility of offending or reoffending.

There's also the issue of drinking or engaging in activities that should not be available to youth under the age of 18. When you combine not being able to drive with not being able to drink, especially for a youth, you have a powerful incentive not to reoffend.

There is no doubt in my mind that the people of this province are tired of lenient youth offender laws and punishments. It's time we did something to bring back the notion of cause and effect and true consequences, and it is clearly time we did something to reduce crime. It is for those reasons that I fully support Bill 80.

**Mr Preston:** I am pleased to rise today in support of this bill. I have a five-minute speech all nicely written out. I apologize to my staff who have gone over and corrected my grammar and my punctuation, but after the comments today I'm going to have to deviate from this. We've heard comments about responsibility, and the main thrust is responsibility: responsibility for one's actions, responsibility to one's peers and responsibility to society at large. We have to instil a sense of responsibility in our youth today.

There are arguments that this bill is going to infringe on the rights of youth. My wife and I, in my non-political life, run a home for youthful offenders, as most people here know. I have worked over the last 15 or 20 years with probably 100 youth who have lived in my home.

The initial stages of this bill, the initial punishments of this bill are punishments that I mete out in the home, and I did for my own children: a curfew, loss of privileges. I'm pleased to say that over the past 20 years, 70% of the youth who have lived in my home have gone on to lead a life without further crime. I'm very pleased that these youth continue to call back. They call on Father's Day, they call at Christmas. They learned a sense of responsibility.

As a requirement in my home, I have a poster, which I would like to have brought today but I know you would rule against it, a poster about this size. It's got 16 squares on it, and 15 of those squares outline the youths' rights. One square outlines their responsibilities. The third square down on the right-hand side says, "If you're convicted of an offence, you have even more rights."

I think the response of the official opposition was probably expected.

**Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie):** Disappointing.

**Mr Preston:** It's disappointing, yes.

The speaker from the New Democratic Party, the member for Cochrane South, was very reasonable.

**Mr Klees:** It's about time.

**Mr Preston:** Yes, surprisingly, very reasonable. He also spoke of rights. The speaker from our party spoke about the problems with the charter. What about the charter rights of the victims? "Oh, these are only small crimes: a broken window, graffiti on somebody's garage door." That's not the way the victim feels about it.

We're not imposing harsh penalties on a youth who has committed a minor offence. We're saying, "You have to go to school and you've got to be in by 10 o'clock" — that's not too tough — "but when you do the third crime,

you're going to have to do the time." To say that the sentence is over and we can't expect to carry it on — in the case of the third crime, under this bill, the sentence does not end until they are 22.

How do you enforce it? How do you get the person selling alcohol, how do you get the person selling the tickets to enforce it? They can't, as they cannot enforce probation laws that work from age 12 through to whenever. But when you commit an offence —

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr Preston:** I hope everybody in this House will back this bill.

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I am pleased to rise to speak to Mr Brown's bill, my friend from Scarborough West's bill. I think he raises with this bill one of the most serious concerns we have in our society today, and that's how we deal with young offenders and the young offender population and how we deal with young people who are not behaving or taking their responsibilities in a way that any of us would want to happen, and conversely, the effect that has on individuals and on property in this province.

1150

Certainly, I think from the days of the ancient Greeks, when Socrates talked about the younger generation in effect going to hell in a handbasket, we have had this problem in western civilization, and probably in every civilization in the history of this planet. I know we have difficulties and we aren't addressing this situation at the present time in an acceptable way. We have too many people being victims of what many of us would consider to be just plain young punks. I think the member might even agree with my characterization of that.

My problem is not that the member brought the bill before the House, because I'm glad he did. It gives us an opportunity to speak to this issue. It gives us an opportunity to say: "Look, we understand there's a problem and we understand we have to deal more effectively with the young people in our society. We have to make sure they take their responsibilities as citizens, that their families support them in taking their responsibilities and that they can do that." My difficulty with this bill, not being a lawyer — and that's sometimes a plus around here — is that many sections of this bill, I suggest to the member, will just plain not work and are probably unconstitutional, would not be permitted to go forward.

Rather than going forward with this as a bill, I would hope we could maybe have a look at this as members of the Legislature looking at solutions that are appropriate in the space of the next few weeks, few months, whatever, so that we can look directly at the problem. The problem is serious and I'm happy the member has brought it forward, but I would think perhaps it should be a resolution asking that we establish or send to one of our committees a direction to have a look at this problem and to see what we can do in Ontario to deal with the difficulty of instilling, I think is the right way to look at it, responsibility in those young people in our province who for one reason or another have decided not to follow the rules.

I'm concerned that the remedies that are here are both unenforceable and probably, as I said, unconstitutional, so



I would suggest to the member that perhaps the way to go would be what we have in committees. All members know we have a 125 process, where members can, in one of the four committees, and in this case the justice committee, have before them the opportunity to present a motion — it can be by a private member — to be considered for 12 hours, to have a look at this issue in a non-partisan, reasonable way. I don't think you're hearing from anybody in this place that the issue isn't important. What you're hearing from people in this place is that the proposed solution may not be the appropriate one: (a) It probably is unenforceable and (b) it's probably unconstitutional.

That's our problem on this side. I again commend the member for bringing the issue forward, because I think it's important, and I suggest these other remedies for him as a private member to move this issue forward so that we can as legislators debate this and perhaps have some hearings, get some people in who know about these things with some degree of expertise. We can listen to them and then propose some solutions that will be enforceable, will work and will assist us in making those kinds of decisions.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** Just briefly. I have not had a real opportunity to extensively look at the bill. I think that with respect to what's contained in it, I would echo the remarks made by my colleague who spoke previously. There are some difficulties that I see with respect to amendments to the Highway Traffic Act that I have concern with.

I think the whole idea with respect to offenders is to rehabilitate and to give those offenders the opportunity to come back into society, particularly at a young age. I understand the need to curb privileges. I understand that is an attempt being made under this act with respect to curfew orders, restricting the granting of a licence to someone who is a repeat offender until that person has attained the age of 19 years. I'm concerned about that, because if we're talking about an offender who is trying to be rehabilitated, if that involves such an offender going out and seeking employment, for example, which would require that offender to have a licence and to use that licence, then you're cutting off or restricting access to those types of jobs. I think you have to consider that.

I would echo what my colleague has suggested in terms of looking at this very carefully, studying it in some other fashion. It would give us a greater opportunity to deal with what was intended and what can be done and accomplished through the various means that we have in this assembly.

I commend the member for bringing this forward. I think it's a truly important matter. I think it's an important matter with respect to what's happening in our society. The kind of criminality that's beginning to take hold of young people is something that is of great concern to us on this side of the House and it's not to be taken lightly, so I say to you that there might be other avenues for this to be dealt with.

**Mr Jim Brown:** Thanks to all those who participated in the debate.

This is a major issue in Ontario, and to now defer it to another method of attacking the issue is to ignore the issue, because it will take so long for this to come back to the House. My bill should be supported at second reading to get it into committee so that we can improve it, so that we can make it the best that it can be, so that the opinions of the opposition and the third party can be incorporated into it. If there are constitutional problems, which I don't really believe there are, but if there are, we can sort them out in committee.

If we vote against it today, you won't see it in this Legislature for years — guaranteed. It's another delaying tactic. How many more kids have to get into trouble? How many more families like the Ambases and the Ewaschuks in the gallery have to lose their kids through murders? How many more victims will there be while we sit here and play our games? We have to vote today for this bill to get it into committee so that we can make it the best that it can be.

Bill 80 does kids a favour: It tells them that minor infractions will be punished. Experience will show, as it has in New York, that major crimes will decrease. Rehabilitation is fine; I want prevention. I don't want kids to get into trouble at all. We owe it to the kids to tell them: "These are the rules. You're going to lose your privileges, so don't fool around."

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** We will deal first with ballot item number 55. If there is any member opposed to taking a vote on this item, they will now please rise.

Mr Cordiano has moved private member's notice of motion number 34.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Thank you. You may take your seats. There will be a division on this. We will have it after the next item.

#### JUVENILE DELINQUENTS ACT (ONTARIO), 1996

#### LOI DE 1996 SUR LES JEUNES DÉLINQUANTS (ONTARIO)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** We will now deal with ballot item number 56, second reading of Bill 80, standing in the name of Mr Brown. If there are any members opposed to taking a vote on this ballot item now, they should please rise.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members; there will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1201 to 1206.*

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Ballot item number 55, private member's notice of motion number 34, standing in the name of Mr Cordiano.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

**Ayes**

Bisson, Gilles	Duncan, Dwight	Martin, Tony
Bradley, James J.	Gerretsen, John	Phillips, Gerry
Brown, Michael A.	Kennedy, Gerard	Pouliot, Gilles
Castrilli, Annamarie	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario
Cordiano, Joseph	Lankin, Frances	Silipo, Tony
Crozier, Bruce	Marchese, Rosario	Wildman, Bud
Curling, Alvin	Martel, Shelley	Wood, Len

**The Acting Speaker:** All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized.

**Nays**

Baird, John R.	Fox, Gary	Parker, John L.
Barrett, Toby	Froese, Tom	Pettit, Trevor
Beaubien, Marcel	Gilchrist, Steve	Preston, Peter
Boushy, Dave	Grimmett, Bill	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Brown, Jim	Hudak, Tim	Sheehan, Frank
Carroll, Jack	Johnson, Ron	Tilson, David
Chudleigh, Ted	Jordan, W. Leo	Vankoughnet, Bill
Clement, Tony	Klees, Frank	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Danford, Harry	Leadston, Gary L.	Wood, Bob
Doyle, Ed	Munro, Julia	Young, Terence H.
Fisher, Barbara	Murdoch, Bill	
Ford, Douglas B.	Newman, Dan	

**Senior Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Journals (Mr Alex D. McFedries):** The ayes are 24, the nays are 34.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare the motion defeated, the resolution lost.

The doors will be opened for 30 seconds.

### JUVENILE DELINQUENTS ACT (ONTARIO), 1996

### LOI DE 1996 SUR LES JEUNES DÉLINQUANTS (ONTARIO)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Ballot item number 56, second reading of Bill 80.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized.

**Ayes**

Arnott, Ted	Duncan, Dwight	Murdoch, Bill
Baird, John R.	Fisher, Barbara	Newman, Dan
Barrett, Toby	Ford, Douglas B.	Parker, John L.
Beaubien, Marcel	Fox, Gary	Pettit, Trevor
Bisson, Gilles	Froese, Tom	Phillips, Gerry
Boushy, Dave	Gerretsen, John	Pouliot, Gilles
Bradley, James J.	Gilchrist, Steve	Preston, Peter
Brown, Jim	Grimmett, Bill	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Brown, Michael A.	Hudak, Tim	Ruprecht, Tony
Carroll, Jack	Johnson, Ron	Sergio, Mario
Chudleigh, Ted	Jordan, W. Leo	Sheehan, Frank
Clement, Tony	Kennedy, Gerard	Silipo, Tony
Colle, Mike	Klees, Frank	Vankoughnet, Bill
Cordiano, Joseph	Kwinter, Monte	Wettlaufer, Wayne

Crozier, Bruce  
Curling, Alvin  
Danford, Harry  
Doyle, Ed

Lalonde, Jean-Marc  
Lankin, Frances  
Leadston, Gary L.  
Munro, Julia

Wood, Bob  
Young, Terence H.

**The Acting Speaker:** All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized.

**Nays**

Laughren, Floyd	Martin, Tony	Wood, Len
Marchese, Rosario	Tilson, David	

**Senior Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Journals (Mr Alex D. McFedries):** The ayes are 52, the nays are 5.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare the bill passed. Pursuant to standing order 96(k), the bill stands referred to the committee of —

**Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West):** General government.

**The Acting Speaker:** The bill stands referred to the standing committee on general government. Is there a majority in favour? The bill is referred to the committee on general government.

There being no further business, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1213 to 1331.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### PETER ENNIS

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** The Sudbury, Ontario and Canadian sporting communities lost a great friend and one of their most talented and committed coaches with the untimely death of Peter Ennis, who passed away after a courageous battle with cancer.

Peter guided Canada's Olympic ladies' basketball team during the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. This was the first time in 12 years that the Canadian women's team had qualified for the Olympics, and Peter Ennis was the person who got them there.

Peter, who was 50 at the time of his death, guided Laurentian University's Lady Vees basketball team. Starting in 1979, he maintained a winning attitude and team at Laurentian. For each of his 17 seasons, Peter guided the Lady Vees to the Canadian championship tournament. His success culminated in back-to-back Canadian titles in 1989-90 and 1990-91, and he was named coach of the year in 1987 and 1991.

Peter, though, taught much more than basketball skills; he taught dedication, determination and diligence. He instilled the real, human and lifelong skills of compassion, cooperation and caring in and for his players.

He will be sadly missed and always loved by his wife, Gail, and children Kelly and Liam.

Those who taught with him will miss his unique sense of humour, and those of us who coached with, for or against him will always remember his sense of fairness. Peter's motto was "Pride and tradition," which made him always strive for gold. I know he has forever attained it.



## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Later today the government will once again be calling Bill 103, which is otherwise known as the megacity bill, for debate in this Legislature. This will be the third day that we've got in some minimal amount of time on debate, and yet the government has yet to inform the public or members of the opposition parties with respect to its intent on public hearings and on passage of this bill.

Our critic for the GTA, the member for Dovercourt, and our House leader, the member for Algoma, have made it very clear that our party's position is that there must be extensive public hearings on this. There are already over 500 people who have applied to be heard by the legislative committee on the megacity legislation. There is great interest, and the numbers are growing every day.

We've also made it clear that we expect that these committee hearings should take place not just here in Queen's Park but in the city council chambers around Metro so that people can come out and can observe and be part of this democratic process.

We've also made it very clear that it would be absolutely anti-democratic for this government to force passage of this bill before citizens have their democratic say through the referenda and consultation processes that have been set in place.

We've yet to get any kind of commitment or guarantee from the government. In fact, it has been alluded to that their options are open to them and that they may well move a time allocation motion to force passage of this through before the referenda. That would be a shame and a travesty of democracy. All people should revolt against that.

## PATHFINDERS AND GIRL GUIDES

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today as the member for Scarborough Centre to inform the members of the Legislature of several of my constituents who will be honoured shortly for their achievements.

I'd like to congratulate Elizabeth Eick, Megan Kuzma, Melissa Martone and Tammi Shapcott, who this past year earned their Canada cord as Pathfinders of Girl Guides of Canada. These 15-year-old girls should be honoured for their dedication and commitment to achieving this award.

In meeting the challenges of their Canada cord, these girls had to complete three stages — bronze, silver and gold — in each of the camping, community, home, outdoor and world emblems and all sections of the "Be prepared" emblem.

Pathfinders and Girl Guides are an excellent and exciting way for girls and young women to learn to become responsible citizens, able to give leadership and service to the community. I am proud to have these four great citizens as members of my community in Scarborough Centre. I would like every member in the House to join me today in offering our congratulations to Elizabeth, Megan, Melissa and Tammi.

## SENIOR CITIZENS

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** Today the Harris government has dealt another huge blow to the seniors in our province. Today, the Harris government has chosen to give the elderly something more to worry about, more to fear, more to lose.

The government is not content with the tremendous pain it has inflicted on seniors so far: user fees for prescriptions, cuts to Wheel-Trans funding, \$40-a-day charges for chronically ill seniors in hospitals, and ending rent control protection. Now, with the introduction of a new tax system, the finance minister proudly boasts that this legislation will protect seniors on fixed incomes by allowing them to place their increased property taxes on a negative mortgage.

Once again, the Harris government is actually adding insult to injury. These are citizens who have dutifully paid taxes all their lives, made many sacrifices and built our province into what it is today. I would like to say to the senior citizens of Ontario that it is shameful and an embarrassment that tax hikes brought on by AVA might actually force some of them from their homes or force these tax hikes to be added to their mortgages.

The number of poor seniors is on the rise. We know that poor seniors are not eligible for a tax cut. We know that this is a group in our society which is most vulnerable to increases in costs for services. These are our seniors.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** We have before the House significant legislation that relates certainly to Metropolitan Toronto, but we also have proposals coming from this government that affect all municipalities across the province and will probably mean cuts in services, loss of jobs and increased property taxes for municipal ratepayers right across Ontario.

If I look at one small community in my own constituency, the community of Wawa, which is the largest community in my constituency, of approximately 4,000 people, already that community has seen significant downturns in employment related to the cuts at the Ministry of Natural Resources. Now we are seeing further cuts. The proposals on education amalgamation of school boards means that the local office of the public school and separate school board will close; those jobs will be lost. We are seeing the closure of the Carlson Wagonlit Travel agency that had a contract with the provincial government and a loss of 20-some jobs in that area. We're seeing significant effects on the private sector because of these job losses.

This government says its reforms are going to mean improvements for people in communities across Ontario. In fact, it means economic downturn and loss of jobs and loss of services for people.

## NANTICOKE GENERATING STATION

**Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk):** As I make this announcement, the Ontario Hydro generating station at Nanticoke in my riding is celebrating its 25th anniversary.



sary. Opened in 1972 by then Premier Bill Davis, Nanticoke generating station has a capacity of over four million kilowatts and has produced to date 320 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity.

Nanticoke is the largest coal-fired generator in North America. Located on Lake Erie, east of Port Dover, this station was the first of three large developments for Nanticoke, which also included Stelco's Lake Erie works and the Texaco — now Esso — oil refinery. Over 80% of the plant's 530 employees live in the Haldimand-Norfolk region and both the station and its staff are very active in our community.

Through previous employment, I have had the pleasure of visiting the thermal generating station many times and I can personally attest to a very important fact: The strength of the Nanticoke station is its high-quality, skilled and productive workforce. This is one reason why Ontario Hydro has been able to cut electricity rates for many large industrial users and has been able to hold rates flat for all other users.

I would like to congratulate everyone who has been involved with the Nanticoke generating station, management, the employees and their union, for a job well done, and my personal best wishes for their continued success in the future.

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#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville):** Today we have yet another mega-announcement as part of a series of mega-changes to Ontario and the beginning of what is, in the opinion of the Ontario Liberal Party, mega-problems for property taxpayers across the province who are heavily burdened now.

As a percentage of our gross domestic product, property taxes in Ontario are as heavy as most other jurisdictions in the OECD. No guarantees that the types of services that are being downloaded to municipalities won't become an even heavier burden for property taxpayers, those people on fixed incomes, those people who can probably least afford to pay what is in effect a very regressive form of taxation.

We know that as the province downloads health care particularly, those costs are going to go up. Long-term care: The costs are going to go up, while education costs stay the same. This party, the Ontario Liberal Party, believes that the property tax base cannot bear this, that residential property taxpayers, be they in Toronto or Windsor or Ottawa, will eventually see large increases in their assessments to cope with what will become exacerbating problems for the municipal property tax base.

We in the Ontario Liberal Party believe that health care and other so-called soft services ought not to be borne by the property tax, but ought to be borne by the wider income tax base, and that's the future of this province.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** I want to take my minute and a half to congratulate John Sewell and the Citizens for Local Democracy, who have been meeting

since December to fight and defeat Bill 103. They have been involved over the last month and a half in a way to be able to show the public at large that they want to participate and that they're offended with what is happening here in Metropolitan Toronto.

We are seeing an expression of growing democracy. They started in the early period of December with a few people at city hall, and those meetings started to grow. On December 23 and December 30, 300 people attended, and last Monday 650 people attended a Holy Trinity Church meeting to defeat this bill.

We expect that this growing democracy is going to grow at next Monday's meeting. We are seeing here an expression of fear. People are afraid of what you are doing to Metropolitan Toronto, of what you are doing to local democracy and what it means for local participation. They are afraid that what they're showing you through these meetings is likely to disappear once you amalgamate.

At this last meeting we had an appearance by the ghost of William Lyon Mackenzie, thanks to Eric Peterson, and Mackenzie reminded us what citizens of Toronto pay to have democratic control. They said the family compact has now been replaced by the corporate compact, and that's what we need to defeat.

#### SCHOOL BOARDS

**Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington):** Speaker, I want you to know I'll try very hard to behave myself this afternoon.

I'm rising this afternoon to thank and commend the Wellington County Board of Education for its positive and cooperative response to the Minister of Education's announcement earlier this week on school board restructuring. Under the changes announced in the legislation, the Wellington and Dufferin boards will come together to become one board effective January of next year.

In a news release issued by the Wellington board, Chairman Jennifer Waterston stated: "This board has never been afraid of change; Change is inevitable. Now that we know what this change is, we can proceed with managing the transition to our new district school board with Dufferin in an orderly fashion."

I'm very pleased that the Minister of Education announced in December that he is maintaining the same level of funding to school boards this year as they received last year. I am also pleased that the minister has indicated that the new funding model will recognize the requirements of special needs students and special circumstances.

I want to advise the minister that I believe the vast majority of educators in Wellington county understand the seriousness of our debt problem. They recognize that they must be part of the solution and they want to continue to provide students with the best level of instruction possible. All of us must recognize the dedication of teachers to our students. In this time of change I encourage the minister to work alongside trustees, educators, parents and students, building on our strengths, striving together to give us the best schools in the world.



## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### PROPERTY ASSESSMENT ÉVALUATION FONCIÈRE

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** This week our government is making important, long-overdue changes to how services are delivered to the people of this province. These changes will ensure that Ontarians get the highest-quality services at the lowest cost, increase accountability of governments and improve fairness for taxpayers. An integral part of these important changes is the Fair Municipal Finance Act, 1997, which I will be introducing later today.

Ontario's system of assessment and property tax is out of date, inconsistent and unclear. In many municipalities of the province, assessments are far out of date. Assessments are based on property values that range from the 1940s to the early 1990s. When assessments no longer reflect how values change over time, the distribution of taxes becomes unfair. Some assessments haven't been updated for 50 years. There are situations where homes purchased at the same time for the same price in the same community are assessed differently.

Past governments failed to take up the challenge to fix this problem. Because they didn't act, thousands of homeowners and businesses are paying more property tax than they should be. That's not fair, and it's harder for businesses to compete when the playing field is not level. Ontarians told us to fix these problems, and we are fixing them. We are creating a municipal property tax system that is fair, clear, more consistent and more accountable.

The bill I'm introducing today will establish the Ontario fair assessment system, which will be based on current value; ensure regular updates of properties' assessed values; make the property tax system fairer and easier for taxpayers to understand; cut property taxes for farmers and woodlot owners; exempt conservation lands from property tax; scrap the outdated business occupancy tax; simplify the process for assessment appeals; and cut red tape and reduce administrative burden for municipalities. Tax inequities that make the economy less efficient will be reduced. This will reinforce our government's moves to support economic growth and create jobs.

As recommended by the Who Does What panel, we are making sure all properties in Ontario are valued in the same year. We started updating assessments last summer. Property assessment will be kept consistent across the province and will be kept current by a process of regular updates. There will be three-year rolling averages to moderate changes from year to year.

People and businesses who have been paying more than their fair share will see their taxes reduced. The Ontario fair assessment system will bring fairness back into property taxation across the province. Similar properties with a similar value within a municipality will now pay similar taxes. That's common sense. Local taxes will now be tied more directly to local services. Local decision-makers will be more accountable to the people who foot the bills: the taxpayers in each community.

Long-overdue changes will be made to the way local governments fund services through local property taxes.

To ensure a smooth transition, municipal governments will have flexibility to phase in the assessment system in a way that is sensitive to local needs. Municipalities will have up to eight years to phase in the tax changes arising from the assessment update, double the period that was made available in the past. We are protecting seniors and disabled people. Municipal governments will be able to bring in changes fairly for these homeowners.

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We will also announce details of how municipalities will have the choice to apply lower tax rates to lower-valued commercial properties.

The new legislation will scrap the outdated business occupancy tax. This tax has been on the books in the province since 1904. It is based on very arbitrary tax rates that have absolutely no relation to the modern-day Ontario economy. Businesses have rightly complained for some time about this tax. The Crombie panel recommended we get rid of it, and we are.

I want to thank David Crombie and his colleagues who worked so hard on this Who Does What initiative. Their advice has been invaluable. As they recommended, we will return delivery of tax assessments to the local level as of January 1, 1998. This will give municipalities the tools to provide assessment services to meet local needs. We will be consulting with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities and the Rural Ontario Municipal Association, as well as other groups, on the implementation of this change.

This legislation and the reforms announced by my colleagues this week will pave the way for less costly government and lower property taxes in the future, and it's about time.

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** This statement is about bringing fairness to farm property owners. As my colleague the Minister of Finance noted in his statement, we are introducing a new initiative aimed at protecting family farms from an unfair property tax system.

This government will introduce a new reduced property tax rate for eligible farm land and outbuildings to replace the current farm tax rebate. This measure amounts to a \$171-million tax cut and responds to one of the major and long-standing concerns expressed by Ontario farmers for some 26 years. Farmers asked us to end the needless red tape of the farm tax rebate program currently in place. We promised we would do it in the rural economic development report of the Common Sense Revolution. We are making good on that promise today.

Cette mesure correspond à une réduction d'impôts de 171 millions de dollars et répond à une préoccupation majeure et de longue date exprimée par les agriculteurs et les agricultrices de l'Ontario qui, depuis près de 26 ans, réclament que nous mettions un terme aux tracasseries administratives du programme de remise fiscale aux exploitations agricoles actuellement offert. Nous avons promis que nous le ferions dans le rapport sur le



développement économique rurale de la Révolution du bon sens. Nous tenons cette promesse aujourd'hui.

We are keeping our promise and we are following through on our commitment to make changes that will provide better services at lower cost to the taxpayer, to all taxpayers, both urban and rural.

The new tax rate takes effect January 1, 1998. The system we are putting in place will maintain a separate property class for farm lands which will continue to be assessed as farm use. Eligible farm land will be taxed at 25% of the municipal residential tax rate. Farms will still require a farm business registration number, as is the current practice. The existing method for assessing farms will stay the same, including the method for assessing the farm residence.

The farm tax rebate program was implemented in 1970 and, I stress, as an interim policy while awaiting property tax reform to correct an inequity in the taxation of farm land. That was 26 years ago. Where previous governments could not or would not bring about farm tax reform, we have created a system that is balanced and fair to farmers and their families. Families will no longer have to redirect cash that could be used for investment into their businesses or into their communities to cover property taxes while the system processes paper, only to return their own money months later in the form of a rebate.

Les gouvernements précédents n'ont pas pu ou n'ont pas voulu entreprendre la réforme de l'imposition des terres agricoles, mais nous avons créé un système équilibré et équitable pour nos agriculteurs et agricultrices et leur famille. Ces familles n'auront plus à débours des fonds qu'ils pourront consacrer à des investissements dans leurs entreprises ou leur collectivité pour payer des impôts fonciers qui leur seront de toute façon remboursés en parti sous forme de remise quelques mois plus tard, après que tous les documents nécessaires auront été traités.

We have worked closely with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario and other farm groups, and they are supportive of this new tax system. As the lead ministry for rural interests, we will continue to work with farmers and rural communities in implementing this very positive reform.

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines):** I'm pleased to announce today that we are cutting the property tax rate on eligible private woodlots and eliminating taxes on conservation lands as part of the government's overall tax strategy.

One of my first steps as Minister of Natural Resources was to reinstate the managed forest tax rebate program after the NDP had cut it. I said then that this was an interim measure. Now I'm pleased to say that we are taking the next step of reforming the property tax system not only on private woodlots, but on conservation lands as well. We promised to improve the system as part of the Common Sense Revolution, and today we are fulfilling that promise.

We're introducing this property tax reform because it's good for our natural resources and our wildlife. Managed forest lands will be assessed at the same rate as farm lands. Now it will be financially viable to have trees on

private land. These reforms will lead to better stewardship of Ontario's forests, which the international marketplace demands. Through these reforms, Ontario is better able to keep its markets open, truthfully saying that all our wood products come from sustainably managed forests. Also, by eliminating the conservation land property tax rebate, we will be encouraging land owners to protect these important natural areas over the long term.

These property tax reforms on eligible private woodlots and conservation lands will go into effect in the 1998 tax year. Through these reforms, this government is clearly demonstrating its commitment to private ownership and supporting our natural resources.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Responses?

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I think every property taxpayer in Ontario needs to pay careful attention to what the government is doing today. I would just warn people in Ontario: Expect that as a result of all of the actions of this government, your property taxes are going to go up, and up dramatically. What the government has decided to do is, to fund its tax cut, it has off-loaded on the municipalities millions and millions —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order, government members.

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** It's a big joke.

**The Speaker:** Order, member for Oakwood. Thanks.

**Mr Phillips:** We now know who is paying for your tax scheme. It is the property taxpayers of Ontario. We've heard this week, now that we've heard some more offloading, I think now about \$6.8 billion of former provincial government responsibility on the property tax. Some of the most vulnerable people, half a million of our young people who are on social assistance, are now relying on property taxes, and what we heard today is an announcement to revise property taxes.

**1400**

Here are the questions that have to be asked: Table the impact studies. Nobody in this province is going to buy your proposals without knowing how it is going to impact on them. We'll want those impact studies.

You have decided to cut out \$1.5 billion of business occupancy tax. Yes, you've cut that out; no mention of where you're going to find the \$1.5 billion. I say to property taxpayers: "Beware. You may very well find you are paying for it."

You talked about reducing property tax on business. You're giving the municipalities no more money. Where is it going to come from? Listen carefully, property taxpayers: You're going to pay for that.

You talk about aiding seniors. The report that was done said hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars are going to be required by the provincial government to help seniors. No mention of hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars in this statement. I hope later today you will announce the fund for that.

The Crombie recommendation said, "Don't turn over assessment until this process is done," and then you misrepresent Mr Crombie's statements in your own announcement. You promised a couple of days ago that the taxpayers of this province would see a 10% cut in their property tax. I would just say to everyone, that is cutting services by \$1.4 billion. Table that study, Minister. Don't hold out and don't put the mayors of this prov-



ince under the gun. You're cutting support from the province for the municipalities.

The announcement we have here today, vague as it is, is a warning signal to the property taxpayers of Ontario that the government is offloading. The government has made promises to the business community that it will offload more on the residential property taxpayer. Crombie and others have said you should be providing hundreds of millions of dollars for bridging support for the elderly. None of it is in here.

So I say to Ontario: You're beginning to see the results of this cold, mean Common Sense Revolution. It's a tax break for the best-off in this province and tax increases for the most vulnerable.

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** Minister, in your announcement today, a statement on the farm property tax rebate, I will agree with one point: that you have removed the red tape from the program. However, what you didn't say today was how municipalities are going to recoup \$171 million. You haven't stated that. Mill rates are going to have to increase in order for them to acquire this \$171 million.

We'll be watching to see if your shell games of this week continue. You've downloaded services on to municipalities, such as welfare and health care, both volatile programs, and you quoted that you would do something with the farm property tax rebate in your Common Sense Revolution. But in the revolution document you always said, and this is the rural one: "...we make a commitment to end the practice of downloading responsibilities on municipalities and regions, forcing them to raise property taxes or cut services." We'll be watching.

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** In response to the statement by the Minister of Natural Resources, I find it extraordinarily interesting for you to make an election promise to have the forest tax rebate reinstated. You forgot in your Common Sense Revolution to tell the people of the province that the people who would pay for it are the property tax folks in their own areas. I think it is absolutely disgraceful for you to dump this kind of government —

**The Speaker:** Order. The third party, the member for Lake Nipigon.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** What a week it's been, what a mess we're in. I recall so vividly, and maybe you were on that bus, Mr Speaker, in the course of the last provincial election when Mike Harris toured the province on this large bus, accompanied by many of the members here, and it said on the side of the bus, "Mike the Taxfighter." If you saw the same bus today, if you were a municipal councillor or if you were a taxpayer, you would have "Mike the Taxhiker."

It started a mere week ago with the lure, with the pretence, through education taxes, that the average men and women, the property owners in this province, were to get a tax break. Then the other shoe was about to drop. In the past three days the people of Ontario have been presented with a long list, with a litany of downloading to the level which is the most vulnerable, the third tier of governing.

Public health is no longer a provincial responsibility. Public housing: You know the demographics. You, Minister, are an educated person. The population is aging.

Nursing, long-term care for the elderly, welfare — the most vulnerable. When the downcycle hits, this will take on extraordinary proportions. Policing: If you can afford police, it's okay; if you cannot afford it, pack up and go. Sewer and water, the environment, the TTC, roads, GO Transit, libraries, all sorts of transportation, airports, ferries — if you're Mike Water, I guess you can walk across; if you're you and I, you can swim or sink.

What we have here is the pinning of wealthy municipalities vis-à-vis those less fortunate. In the future, with this regime, it will matter little who governs you; it will matter a lot more how wealthy you are and where you live. Let's make no mistake about it. This is hypocrisy; this is a shell game. Those who can run the fastest, those who are the fittest, the least vulnerable, will survive. But the rest of us, because we're all on a waiting list, we'll have to pay and pay dearly.

Today the last straw: actual value assessment. The Golden report said, "Put \$200 million aside to avoid dislocation so that those who are the most vulnerable will have a chance to be at least like some who have more." What you have is a ghetto-like possibility. What you have is polarization, the systematic and deliberate erosion of the people who pay for all this: the middle class. The result of this revolution will be that those who are the middle class, with this regime will say little, and those who have less, the most vulnerable, will say nothing, but both, the most vulnerable and the people who will have less, will pay for the rest.

Where are the impact studies? Where are they so people can look and have their own assessment and make some recommendation? This thing is being steamrolled. For those who remember Macbeth, this government will have blood on its hands and you won't be able to take the stain away. Mike Harris will say: "I'm the Taxfighter. Don't blame me. Blame AMO. Blame your reeve. Blame your council."

What has been done today, what has been done through the week is nothing short of a travesty, and the people who can least defend themselves will be asked to carry the guilt. Where the guilt lies is right across the hall.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Every rural member of this Legislature knows that the announcements made today by the Minister of Finance, in conjunction with the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the Minister of Natural Resources, are nothing but a downloading of costs for farm taxes and conservation land taxes to the municipalities. This is the single-largest expenditure the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, member for Algoma.

1410

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** My question is for the Minister of Finance, the minister responsible for property tax increases across Ontario. Yesterday you defended your \$2-million, taxpayer-funded propaganda



campaign by saying, "I think the government has a responsibility to communicate with the electorate." Minister, then let the people know what the impact of your announcements today will be on them, because we know that your government has detailed neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood impact studies on property tax increases. Strangely, you're refusing to release those studies, even after requests have been made through the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

If taxpayers, as you say, have the right to know, why aren't you letting them know what this will cost them? Why aren't you releasing those impact studies today?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** The honourable member knows full well that what we have done is give to municipalities \$5.4 billion a year in terms of education taxation revenue coming off the property tax and we have committed to \$1 billion a year, which will continue to go on, totalling \$6.4 billion a year. We have asked municipalities to assume responsibility for programs totalling slightly less than \$6.4 billion a year. When this exercise is complete and municipalities are able to deliver a lot of these local programs far more cost-effectively than the provincial government could, they will have the ability to lower property taxes in Ontario, not raise them.

**Mr Cordiano:** It's becoming very clear to the people of this province that you really don't want them to know what's going on. You're going to increase their municipal property taxes and you're not telling them by how much. All you want to do is create that smokescreen of chaos, to confuse and hamper people's efforts to know what's going on.

Your property tax increases can only be described as nothing but dumping on municipalities. You are asking the people of Ontario to trust you, to go on blind faith: "Everything's going to be all right." This after this government's actions have led to a cut in education spending of nearly \$1 billion and a cut in health care of nearly \$1.3 billion.

I ask the minister again, will you release the neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood impact studies and tell people what's really going to go on with their increases in property taxes? It's incumbent on you to let them know. Will you stand up today and release those impact studies?

**Hon Mr Eves:** The honourable member talks about a \$1.3-billion reduction in health care funding. He knows full well that this government made a commitment to spend no less than \$17.4 billion on health care, and we have in fact exceeded that number by some \$300 million this year. He was here yesterday and he heard the Minister of Health confirm that the province of Ontario will continue to live up to its commitment to spend no less than \$17.4 billion a year on health care, and we will live up to that commitment.

We have a track record of delivering on our promises. We promised personal income tax cuts and we delivered. I welcome the people of Ontario to compare the credibility of the Liberal government's record in Ontario from 1985 to 1990 and see what they did with taxes, raising them 35 times and putting us billions of dollars in debt,

and what this government is doing, actually delivering on the commitment it made.

**Mr Cordiano:** Yesterday the minister admitted to the media that approximately half the residents of Toronto could expect an increase in their property taxes as a result of today's announcement. People are really worried, small businesses are worried, because their property taxes are going to go through the roof. They want to know how this is going to affect them. It's incredible that this government is willing to waste taxpayers' money on propaganda that promotes itself, but you're not willing to tell people how this will impact on them.

Again, for the third time, I want to ask the minister if he will release the impact studies. We know they exist, so there's no use in your trying to hide them. Those impact studies will reveal to people, to seniors, to business people right across the province just how this will impact on them. They need to know. Once again I ask the minister, will you release those studies?

**Hon Mr Eves:** The honourable member talks about the statements the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing made yesterday. He forgot to complete the sentence, that 50% of the taxpayers in Metro Toronto, he estimates, will have reduced taxes as a result of this. If he will be patient and wait until the bill is introduced, he will see that there are going to be accommodations made for seniors and disabled people.

I remind the honourable member about the remarks of a colleague of his. On January 11, 1996, Liberal MPP Alvin Curling, Scarborough North, said: "Everyone has long agreed the property tax system is filled with inequities, but political governments have prevented successive governments from doing anything about it. The bottom line is fairness and guts. Both have been lacking, but I'm not sure this government will have the guts to follow through and change that."

He's right. Unlike yours, we did.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. New question.

**Mr Cordiano:** It's clear this government can only be described as shifty. Talk about fairness; there's no fairness in what they're doing. They haven't got the guts to release the impact studies.

My second question is for the Minister of Finance once again. Yesterday your old friends at the Canadian Taxpayers Federation said your decision to dump billions of dollars in new costs on to municipal property taxes is nothing but a shell game designed to force municipalities to raise property taxes. That's what they said. Today your friends at the Toronto Sun said your plan to dump welfare on the backs of property taxpayers was "a bad idea."

Minister, given that the people who used to be your biggest supporters now think you're heading 180 degrees in the wrong direction, will you come clean and admit that your announcements this week will result in higher property taxes?

**Hon Mr Eves:** Absolutely not. I'm pleased to see the honourable member is now taking everything the taxpayers' coalition says as gospel, because he wasn't singing that tune when we reduced provincial income tax rates.



If the honourable member wants to talk about endorsements and lack thereof, we can play this game all afternoon. A quote today: "Our members are both delighted and relieved," said president of the Ontario Hotel and Motel Association and the Hotel Association of Metropolitan Toronto, Rod Seiling, 'that finally fair tax treatment is a reality.'"

Speaking of Toronto Sun editorials, he might want to refer to the one on January 29, 1996. But the real issue isn't that some taxes are going to go up and some down but rather, at the end of the day —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Minister of Finance, come to order, please. Supplementary.

**Mr Cordiano:** My, my, how things change. The Toronto Sun goes on to say that your plans are based on a prayer. The Toronto Sun says your bailout fund is "a makeshift plan that probably won't work." It says the welfare bill that you're passing on to municipalities has no business being on the backs of property taxpayers. With friends like that, Minister, I don't think you need any more enemies.

But I want to get back to the issue at hand, and the issue is about property tax increases. You've admitted in your announcement that your actions will have serious consequences on seniors and others on fixed incomes.

**Hon Mr Eves:** Not really.

**Mr Cordiano:** It certainly will. Can you tell me why you think it's okay for seniors to take out new mortgages on their homes, why it's okay for seniors to increase their debt to pay for your property tax increases? Why is that acceptable to you, Minister?

**Hon Mr Eves:** That is not going to happen, and the member knows it. I've said in my statement and I will say later today when we introduce the legislation that accommodation will be made for senior citizens and disabled people.

Speaking of seniors, he might want to know what Al Smith, the president of the united seniors coalition, says: "The United Senior Citizens coalition supports the government's initiative to remove education funding from the property taxes. It is something that seniors have wanted for a long time."

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Minister of Finance.

**Hon Mr Eves:** Speaking of what people have to say about changing the assessment system, how about the member for Scarborough-Agincourt in 1990?

"Honouring Metro Toronto's request, the provincial government has taken the necessary steps to permit Metro-wide reassessment of property tax under a new system. This will ensure equity of tax burden between newer and older homes, bringing substantial savings to the taxpayers of Scarborough-Agincourt."

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**Mr Cordiano:** What a bunch of bunk. This minister talks about seniors, and I'm telling him it's quite a serious matter, because seniors will be hard-pressed to pay those property tax increases. Today the minister has failed to indicate that he's allocating additional funds to offset those increases. You haven't announced that today. You haven't made any suggestion that this would be the case in any specific terms.

I ask the minister, where is the money going to come from? All you've offered seniors is that they can have negative mortgages. What you're saying to seniors is: "Forget about all the money and all the hard work you've put into your own homes. You can now go out and take out a mortgage on that equity," and when it comes time for them to sell those homes —

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** That could be your advice, but it's not ours.

**Mr Cordiano:** That's your advice. That's what the minister has been quoted as saying. You simply don't care about what's going to happen to seniors. You simply don't care. You haven't announced any funding for them. You've failed to release the impact studies. You haven't told us anything today that would lead us to believe that you're going to protect seniors against these huge increases. I ask the minister, show us that you're prepared to fund that transition. You haven't indicated that today.

**Hon Mr Eves:** To the honourable member, I have certainly never been quoted, as he said just a few minutes ago, as saying that seniors could take out a mortgage on their home or a negative mortgage on their home. That is totally untrue, and he might want to correct the record.

There will be every opportunity, as he will see later today when the legislation is introduced, for municipalities to make accommodation for senior citizens. We will have —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Minister of Finance.

**Hon Mr Eves:** If the seniors are living in Forest Hill or Rosedale, yes, they may have some substantial property tax increases, but I think most of them there can afford to take care of it. Other seniors, by the way, in this city of Metropolitan Toronto have been paying more than their share relative to other people, and they will receive the break they deserve. What have you got against those seniors? Do you think it's fair that some property taxpayers in the wealthiest neighbourhoods in this country are living on 1940 assessed values while others are paying their fair share at 1992 assessed values? Is that what you're advocating?

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** My question is to the Minister of Finance. Today you've announced your market value assessment legislation. It appears to me that what you want is to have some people in Metro and other municipalities thank you for money that you're taking from others. It appears to me that the Taxfighter is giving many people in Metro and other jurisdictions a tax hike, and added to this are many other things, such as the offloading of costs, which in Toronto in particular means \$200 million in increases, and all the other time bomb additions to the municipalities: property taxpayers will now pay for long-term care, with an aging population; they'll pay for public housing that needs major repairs; and they'll pay for welfare costs that will soar with the next recession — and there will be one.

There will be no windfall for anybody in this, Minister, and your who does what to whom scheme means ultimately that everybody's property taxes are going to go up. Can you account for that?



**Hon Mr Eves:** The honourable member knows full well that everybody's property taxes are not going to go up. He knows that, and I don't know why he'd stand in his place and make such a ridiculous statement. I don't know what it is that members of the opposition have against a fair and equitable system across the province. Why is it that you believe that people —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Members for Beaches-Woodbine and Fort York —

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** — and the member for Cochrane South, please come to order. Thank you. Minister of Finance?

**Hon Mr Eves:** I think I answered the question.

**Mr Marchese:** He didn't answer the question. I said that as a result of this scheme many people are going to face a tax hike. That's a fact. He's taking from some to give to others. That's a fact. When you add to that these additional costs, our estimates are that there will be additional property tax increases. That's a fact. Prove us wrong. We're asking you to prove us wrong. Your scheme will hurt a lot of working and middle-class people. That's what we're seeing. This is the way we're adding up the numbers, obviously, but prove us wrong as you go through this.

You said the tax increases will be phased in, but if you're getting a 50% tax hike, in my view that's still a 50% tax hike. Phased in over a two-year period or a five-year period, it's a tax hike. Anne Golden, in her thorough study for the greater Toronto area, said it would take \$200 million to properly cushion the blow of a move to market value assessment for low- and middle-income families who can't afford a big tax hike. We believe she makes eminent sense in this. Minister, are you prepared to put that \$200 million that Anne Golden recommended into helping people who won't be able to afford a tax hike?

**Hon Mr Eves:** I don't think I need any advice from a government whose estimates ran the debt of this province to \$100 billion, that never had an annual deficit of less than \$10 billion in all the time they were in government. If I were the members of the opposition, I would wait until today is over and I would wait until the Minister of Municipal Affairs makes his announcement tomorrow before I ran off at the mouth too much about what is or isn't going to be. The week isn't over yet.

**Mr Marchese:** The minister has been driving in a limousine for too long. He's got to get out of that limousine and face the facts. Unless, of course, he can come up with the impact study to show us differently, we are going to assume from all the sources we've got that we've got a problem, that the property taxpayer's got a problem, that seniors and low-income people will have a problem.

You are spending \$600 million on reassessing the whole province, yet we're hearing rumours that your reassessment is way behind schedule. Experts in Vancouver, and I talked to a few who run the system you're trying to emulate, say it will take three years to properly assess four million properties, not the one year you've given it. We all know that if the reassessment is done badly, it will be a waste of \$60 million. In fact, if

it's done badly, the whole province will be hurt. I ask you, have you looked at this? Do you have the resources to do this properly in the one year you've given this project? If you don't and you do it wrong, all of us will be hurt in Ontario.

**Hon Mr Eves:** We're not in British Columbia and this isn't 1982. We are in Ontario and it's 1997. We do have more updated methods in 1997 of assessing properties than they did in 1982.

The member might want to look at some quotes from the Golden report, which of course his government commissioned, and he might also want to look at some reports from the Fair Tax Commission that his government commissioned to see what they have to say about current value assessment and getting rid of business occupancy tax.

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**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** I have a question for the government House leader. Minister, I want to ask you about Bill 103. We know from your discussions and your intentions stated this morning at the House leaders' meeting that you may very well be bringing in next week, as early as Monday afternoon for debate on Tuesday, a time allocation motion on Bill 103. That, for the public, is a closure motion which would shut down debate on second reading and limit severely the time for debate in committee of this important bill to maybe a few weeks, and most importantly, ensure that the bill is finished and done with long before the referendum takes place in Metropolitan Toronto. Minister, will you tell us today that you will not bring in that kind of motion next week?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** First of all, I would indicate that there is only one party in this House limiting the debate on this issue at the present time, and that's the third party. Through their constant motions to adjourn the House, the members of this House have not had the opportunity to debate. The government is here prepared to debate, my sense is that the opposition party is prepared to debate this issue, but the third party for some reason or another has restricted the ability of this House to debate Bill 103.

I will say that the public hearings on this particular bill, as are all public hearings on all bills, are the subject of debate between the House leaders. The topic was mentioned this morning. The issue has not been finalized. I can assure you that we will carry on negotiations and I can assure you that at the end of the day there will be numerous public hearings and everybody will have an opportunity to have their say.

**Mr Silipo:** Minister, we strongly oppose this bill. You know that. We can all stand here and talk and debate this bill for a long time, but we believe it's more important for the citizens of Metropolitan Toronto to have their say than it is for us in this House to be debating this bill. We believe that it's essential and beyond any negotiations that the bill not pass until the referendum has taken place.

If you had any decency left in terms of respect for the process and respect for the people of Metropolitan Toronto, then I would suggest to you, unless you're afraid of the referendum, that you would be prepared to



stand in your place today and clearly guarantee that you would not ram the bill through before the referendum takes place. You have until the end of March, which is long after the referendum. Will you stand in your place today and guarantee that the bill will not be rammed through before the referendum takes place?

**Hon David Johnson:** The member opposite talks in terms of respect for the House. I ask you, is there respect for this House in continually calling for motions of adjournment, whereby the people of Ontario tuning in to hear the debate see nothing and hear nothing but bells ringing and empty space? I would suggest there would be a higher level of sincerity involved in the question if the third party permitted the debate to proceed, permitted all the ideas to come out, permitted the full discussion to take place.

The government is committed to public hearings, the government is committed to hearing the people, and the process will be negotiated through the House leaders.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** My supplementary is to the same minister, and I want to assure him and his colleagues that we are indeed sincere. We're sincere in our desire to ensure that the people of Metropolitan Toronto have a real say and have input into this legislation, and we will do everything possible to ensure that this bill does not pass until after the people of this city and the metropolitan area have had an opportunity to express their democratic will.

The government cannot assume that this legislation is going to pass without significant amendment based on the will of the people of this region.

Will the minister assure us that the legislation will not be passed until after the referendum, and in the meantime that the ads his government is airing, acting as if this legislation and other pieces of legislation have been passed, are withdrawn?

**Hon David Johnson:** This outrage from the House leader of the third party, the same party that is preventing debate on this very piece of legislation in the House, the same party that when in government believed so much in democracy that it severely limited debate on Bill 40, for example, severely limited debate on market value assessment and virtually —

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** There were six weeks of public hearings and 18 months in the House. We limited debate after 18 months.

**The Speaker:** Member for Cochrane South.

**Hon David Johnson:** And yes, the social contract, which did not get the debate it deserved. But I will assure the members opposite that this government is committed to full public hearings, that the people, not only the people in Metropolitan Toronto, will have every opportunity to speak to this issue. Indeed, there are many people living outside Metropolitan Toronto who have an interest in this matter, and they will also have full opportunity through the public hearing process, which will be negotiated with the House leaders.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Minister of Finance, and I want to follow up on my deputy leader's question about the impact studies that have been done. You are proceeding

with changes in property tax that will have a huge impact on every property taxpayer in the province. We know you have three studies that you are keeping secret from the people of Ontario, studies paid for by the taxpayer, studies that have been used to reach your conclusion, studies that frankly you owe to the people of Ontario. Because this is so important to every single person in the province, will you agree today to release those three studies?

**Hon Mr Eves:** The honourable member knows quite well that nobody can say with an exact degree of accuracy until —

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Eves:** No, that's true. Until the reassessments are done, how do you know what the assessment is going to be? But one can surmise from this that in any community or area of the province that has a relatively recent reassessment, such as 1988 values or 1992 values, the change will be minimal, if any, and it may well be reduced taxation, if he knows anything about the real estate market between 1988 and 1997.

As with his positive, supportive quote for a current-value assessment system in 1990 when he was a member of the government of the day, he will know that yes, there will be winners and losers in Metropolitan Toronto; there is no doubt about that. For the people who will have to pay more because their value is a 1940 assessment, the ability will be there to phase it in. Seniors and disabled people will be protected.

**Mr Phillips:** Let's be very direct and clear and straightforward with you, because the people of Ontario are watching you waffle and avoid the answer and hide the studies.

**Hon Mr Eves:** I am not waffling.

**Mr Phillips:** Yes, you are. The fact of the matter is — and I hope the people of Ontario are watching this — that the government has three studies that you paid for, that the taxpayers paid for, that show the impact of these tax changes. You owe them to the people of Ontario. If this thing is so good, they should be out fully in the public.

You will be forced eventually to release this. Eventually, you will. Why don't you simply do the honourable thing and today agree immediately? The reports have been done. You have them in your office. They show the impact of your changes. They were paid for by the taxpayers. There is no reason for you to keep them secret. Will you agree today to release those studies so we can have a sensible discussion about your bill?

**Hon Mr Eves:** Talking about doing the honourable thing, I heard the member say yesterday and I heard him again say today in his reply to ministerial statements that I was quoted yesterday as saying unequivocally that everybody would get a 10% tax reduction in the province of Ontario. He knows full well that is inaccurate. He was standing right beside me in the scrum when I was being interviewed. If you want me to read my quote in its entirety I'll be more than happy to do so. Will you do the honourable thing and stand up and apologize for that misinformation?

**The Speaker:** Order. Minister of Finance, it's not parliamentary.



**Hon Mr Eves:** Inaccurate information, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Phillips:** I assume firstly the minister will do the honourable thing and table the studies.

**The Speaker:** Order. The member for Scarborough-Agincourt, there are no more questions. That was the final supplementary.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** No, that's just not how it works.

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## NURSING STAFF

**Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside):** I have a question to the Minister of Health. Minister, you will know that this morning a press conference was held by the service employees' union and the Canadian Union of Public Employees, which represent a large number of nursing home workers in this province. Those two unions, which are very concerned about the residents who live in nursing homes in this province, documented some of the decreases in the quality of care in our nursing homes as a result of a change in regulation that you made in your government.

Last June you removed the requirement for a minimum, and I emphasize the word "minimum," of 2.25 hours of care for each of the residents per day. That resulted in the layoff of many nursing home workers, but more important resulted in a substantial decrease in the quality of care. Why did you do that at the expense of nursing home residents, other than simply trying to lower the cost of nursing homes for the private nursing homes?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** What I'm pleased to say is that last year the Ministry of Health introduced needs-based funding. In other words, the funding is tailored to the needs of the residents involved in the long-term-care facilities, in the homes for the aged and the nursing homes. Previously, it had been a flat formula.

This is something that has long been advocated, for example, by the Ontario Nursing Home Association. It's a fairer way of dealing with the needs of residents in homes across Ontario. There was not a nickel reduced. The total amount of money was protected. It was redivided. Seventy-five per cent of the facilities actually received an increase in funding, across Ontario, and that, instead of reducing jobs, actually increased the number of jobs by over 200 across Ontario. So this is a fairer system and it recognizes the needs in our long-term —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you, Minister. Supplementary?

**Mr Cooke:** I wasn't suggesting that the government was spending less money. I guess my concern was that less money was going to the residents and perhaps more money was going to the nursing home owners. These two unions have documented the fact that there were significant layoffs at the expense of the residents.

Let me ask the minister one other question. In the disentanglement announcements this week, you have offloaded to the municipalities half the costs of long-term care. Can the minister tell us today, is he prepared to make a commitment that as to municipal homes for the

aged, you will not allow them to privatize, which would result in a further decrease in the quality of care for residents in this province?

**Hon David Johnson:** I take great issue with reduction in terms of standards. I think what we've done through this formula — and I might say it's something that the previous government also attempted to do in 1992 and 1993, to introduce needs-based funding, but because of the union objections they back-tracked, and back-tracked against the wishes of the Ontario Nursing Home Association, for example.

We are committed to better care in the long-term-care facilities, and we will continue as a province to set the standards; the compliance standards will continue through the province. There are advisory teams of registered nurses who are monitoring each home and the ministry will continue to work with each home to ensure a high quality of care.

## SENIOR CITIZENS

**Mrs Julia Munro (Durham-York):** My question is for the minister responsible for seniors. Sixty per cent of the property taxes paid by Uxbridge residents in my riding of Durham-York goes towards education. On Monday the government announced changes that will take education expenses off the property tax rolls. I have been talking to seniors in my riding and they want the minister responsible for seniors to explain how this change will affect seniors in Durham-York and across the province.

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Seniors Issues]):** Ontario's 1.4 million seniors over the age of 65, whether they're paying property taxes directly on their home or indirectly through their rent, have been telling politicians at every level of government of the growing costs of education. Premier Davis was the first Premier 20 years ago to recognize this and he brought in the first tax grant program for seniors.

Our Premier, Mike Harris, has gone the next logical step, having listened to seniors, by lifting these property taxes associated with education off the property bill. This is good news for seniors on fixed incomes because they are painfully aware that enrolment in the last 10 years has only gone up 16%, but their taxes have gone up 120%.

The bottom line —

*Interjections.*

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** You are screwing seniors the way you did injured workers.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. The member for Hamilton Centre, the heckling; it's difficult to hear the minister.

**Mr Christopherson:** The minister is difficult as well.

**The Speaker:** Well, the member for Hamilton Centre, I'm not going to have a debate with you. I'm just asking you to come to order. Minister.

**Hon Mr Jackson:** This government is removing those costs that are spiralling out of control, and seniors are aware of it and they have asked for direct accountability. The truth is that an 82-year-old widow in Uxbridge can hold her local mayor more accountable than she can her local trustee, so seniors have asked for this accountability and this government has listened.



**Mrs Munro:** It is my understanding the minister has constantly consulted with seniors over the years, first as an opposition member and now as minister responsible for seniors. Terry Jones, a senior living in Beaverton, told me that this change is long overdue and is a major step in the right direction. Can the minister tell members of the Legislature how seniors have reacted to the news that education has been taken off the property tax rolls?

**Hon Mr Jackson:** There are quite a few former public and separate school trustees who are in this House, on all sides of the House, who are now MPPs, who are aware. With some of them, when they left as a trustee, 40% of their municipal taxes was going to education. Now in some parts of this province it's as high as 70%.

It's not surprising that the United Senior Citizens of Ontario, representing half a million seniors, submitted a resolution to this province stating: "Resistance is growing, especially among the elderly, to paying the ever-growing education levies. Much of the crippling municipal tax burden is caused by education taxes." That's why their president, Al Smith, has indicated clearly that he is pleased that the provincial government of Ontario has moved in this direction. He has openly stated that the budgets at municipal level would be held more accountable and that this is good news for seniors. That is why we are delivering this program for seniors and we've been listening to what they've had to tell us.

#### LONG-TERM-CARE REFORM

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** My question is for the Minister of Health. This is a question in connection with your government's really shocking announcement that you're dumping health care on the municipalities.

On Tuesday the Minister of Community and Social Services told us about the new long-term-care agency to coordinate the care for sick people in this province, for the disabled and for frail seniors, and that this agency — I asked a question, to comment on how it was going to pool property taxes from one area of the province to another and her answer was as follows: "I'm not...sure what he's" — in this case it's me — "referencing when he talks about allocating taxes. They will be doing no such thing."

Minister, let me ask you the same question: Will the province's new long-term-care agency, which by the way only gives municipalities a one-third interest in decision-making, be collecting property tax money from every municipality across Ontario, including those which don't have long-term-care facilities, and then redistributing it anywhere that agency sees fit? Isn't that exactly what property tax pooling is all about?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** The agency that will be set up will capture some of the improvements that have been made in the long-term-care field, some of the ones I was debating with the member for Windsor-Riverside just recently, and it will move from there in terms of cooperation between the province and the municipalities. Through that I think we'll see better integration of the health care system.

Yes, municipalities will be contributing. The precise formula has not been determined. There may not be long-term-care facilities in some municipalities — that's an obvious statement of fact — but I think we would all agree that there are residents of just about every municipality who need long-term-care facilities, who need that sort of support. Many of those people, of course, are finding their way into adjacent municipalities. Through a consultative process, we'll determine the precise model of participation of the municipalities.

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**Mr Kennedy:** What the minister just told us is that the people of Belleville could be paying for the long-term facilities in Metro or the other way around.

Minister, what you're telling us is that there's a significant reduction in quality that can be expected from the instability of putting these services on the property tax. How will you coordinate with long-term-care delivery services? Your staff have told us that 95% of the new money for long-term care is going to go to communities that have hospital restructuring commissions taking place there.

Does that not mean that what you're really doing with this is you're taking the money you're saving in hospital dollars, as you close hospitals, close hospital beds, and you're putting it on to the municipalities, making them pay for it in long-term-care dollars? Isn't this what you're doing? How does this make you, and this is happening on your watch, look to the seniors, to the people out there who are depending on stable long-term care, the kind of care that's had to grow fourfold in the last number of years and is now headed for the property taxes?

Minister, do you not agree that you're bringing in fundamental instability and that you're making the municipalities pay for your hospital restructuring?

**Hon David Johnson:** First, I want to assure the member opposite that far from reduced standards or reduced service levels in long-term-care facilities, our objective is to improve the long-term care, and I want to assure you that provincial standards will remain in place.

With the coordination which will now exist between the municipal level, the consumers and providers, who will also have a one-third role in the agency — municipalities will have a one-third role, the province will have a one-third role — we'll see the coordination and the integration of services. Far from the fear of the member opposite, there'll be better long-term-care facilities.

#### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a question of the Minister of Health. Could the minister indicate if he and his government support the closure of inpatient beds at Matthews Memorial Hospital in Richards Landing in my riding and the changing of the hospital into a so-called 24-hour outpatient and emergency clinic, albeit with only one nurse on staff in each shift?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** I'm not aware of the details of this particular hospital and I'd be happy to look into it. I don't know if this is one of the hospitals involved in the



restructuring commission which is under way. If it's not, then I would simply say that the operating plans of the hospitals are scrutinized by the district health councils in each area. That process is probably beginning or under way. The ministry will scrutinize the operating plans of this particular hospital. The ministry has given no approval to any closure of beds through the operating plan review this year, because that review is not yet completed, obviously, and the ministry will have to look at this particular situation very carefully.

**Mr Wildman:** The minister is not aware that his predecessor did indeed approve the operating plan of the Sault area hospitals, which included in it the closure of inpatient beds at Matthews Memorial Hospital, which is owned by the Matthews Memorial Hospital Association in Richards Landing. His predecessor did approve the closure of these inpatient beds and the changing of the hospital into an outpatient clinic with 24-hour emergency service, with only one nurse on duty, despite the previous minister's stated commitment to rural hospitals.

If the current minister does not believe that inpatient beds should be closed because of the review, is he now prepared to reverse the decision of his predecessor on the operating plan for 1996-97 for the Sault area hospitals as it relates to the Matthews Memorial Hospital and to ensure there is adequate funding so that there will be some inpatient beds at that facility?

**Hon David Johnson:** I am assured it was actually the health ministry which worked to ensure that 24-hour coverage would be in place at this particular hospital, where the original proposal called for only 12 hours of core service.

But I reiterate to the member opposite that the operating plans of all the budgets will be submitted through the district health councils to the Ministry of Health. There will be that review through the process this year and the ministry will look very carefully at it. I wish to assure the member opposite that this government is committed to better health care and better hospital care in Ontario, and I will look at this particular situation in that light.

AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY

**Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent):** My question is for the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Minister, as you know, in my riding of Chatham-Kent, farming and food production are extremely important industries. With increased residential development in rural areas, the potential for conflict due to lack of understanding of farm practices has increased. We promised to strengthen the Farm Practices Protection Act. Could you please update us on what progress you're making in fulfilling this important commitment?

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** I wish to thank my honourable colleague from Chatham-Kent and I want to advise him, as well as all members of this House, that we are acting and we will be legislating protection for farmers and food producers — it has been too long coming — from frivolous lawsuits and actions. Under normal farming practices, you have to live with what goes on. There are noises and there are smells. That is farming.

We will be having consultation with the different farming groups in the different areas and we will be starting at the Ridgetown College campus on Thursday, January 23. We will be going across the province to consult, to make sure that we have what the farmers need to protect their business of producing food for this province.

**Mr Carroll:** Thank you very much, Minister, for continuing to involve the farm community in your deliberations. As a follow-up question — not everyone in my riding will be able to attend the meeting that will be held in Ridgetown — are there any other systems you are putting in place to allow the valuable input from my local farmers?

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** Yes. We're looking forward to as many people attending the meetings as possible, but for those who can't, they can correspond with the OMAFRA head office in Guelph and express their concerns in writing. They can also do it on the Internet. It's interesting. The Web site is interactive, which means clients can ask questions and make comments. The ministry's World Wide Web site can be found at [www.gov.on.ca/omafra](http://www.gov.on.ca/omafra), and indeed we will be pleased to receive any information they have.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** New question, the member for Fort William.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** At least he didn't pay \$1 million for that ad, Mr Speaker.

1500

EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** My question is for the Minister of Education. Your government would like people to believe that in return for the billions of dollars in new costs that they have dumped on to the municipal property tax base you have picked up the cost of education. In fact, of course, you haven't because you are still taking education taxes from business properties in every community. For the first time, and this is unprecedented in this province, Queen's Park and your Ministry of Education are going to be going into every community and raising taxes for education on business properties.

Your ministry officials have confirmed that they do not know how this new business tax on property that you're raising is going to work. They cannot tell us whether or not you are going to have one uniform tax rate for all businesses in every community or whether you're going to go into each community separately and have a different tax for businesses in each different community. I don't know how this helps the Minister of Finance make property taxes fairer and clearer and more consistent. Minister, I wonder if you could tell us whether you have any idea at all what's going to happen to business taxes for education, whether it's in Toronto or London or Windsor or Sudbury or Ottawa or Thunder Bay or anywhere.

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** Thank you, to the honourable member opposite. I think the member for Fort William will know that we have made some announcements around our intentions to fully fund the needs of every individual student across this province for a first-class, high-quality



education. For the very first time, under our proposals to properly fund the education system, we will have a situation where every student receives what is necessary for that student to get that high quality of education.

We were pleased to make those announcements earlier this week. As the member opposite will know, we have brought forward a bill that will take care of our changes in governance and allow us to go to a new and fairer system, a better system of education in the province. We will be making specific our details on our intentions around funding later on this spring, but we have said very clearly that we have rejected the pooling of industrial and commercial tax revenues. Instead, we will ask the municipalities to collect those revenues as they currently are and to submit those to our district boards of education throughout the province.

**Mrs McLeod:** What's happening is that for the first time indeed the Ministry of Education — Queen's Park — is going into every community and levying a tax directly on business. What the minister has made even clearer than his ministry officials did is that they have absolutely no idea how they're going to do it. No wonder the Ministry of Finance can't produce any impact studies on what's going to happen to taxation, because the Minister of Education has no idea what sort of taxes he's going to levy on businesses.

The bottom line is that businesses in this province are going to have to pay a huge share of all the new costs that you have dumped on to municipalities and their property tax base and they are still going to have to pay the \$3.2 billion in education taxes that you need to fund education.

Minister, that says to me that businesses in every community across this province are looking at a very large increase in their property tax. You need \$3.2 billion in education taxes to keep up the funding on education. So are business taxes going to go up, Minister, or are you going to cut the business taxes for education and cut education spending along with it?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I think what we intend in the financing of education is perfectly clear to the people of Ontario, so I'll try to clear it up for the member opposite.

The province is going to take the burden of taxation off the shoulders of trustees across the province. We are going to accept that burden. We are going to do that to create an opportunity for every student in the province to have a high-quality education. We have said that we will not pool commercial and industrial taxes. We will raise those locally. We will ask the municipalities to give those to the district boards. That's my understanding about the current process.

This is the most bitter and twisted turning of our announcement on Monday that I've heard to date. I wonder if the real cause of that is that your party promised to up the provincial contribution to education. You failed to deliver, and myself and our government and my colleagues, we are delivering.

#### SCHOOL BOARDS

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a question for the Minister of Education and Training. On Monday of this

week the minister made a major announcement with regard to amalgamation of school boards across Ontario, published maps with the new proposed boundaries, indicated that those boundaries were pretty well final and talked about the cutting of the total number of boards across Ontario substantially.

Then later this week the minister had breakfast with the London Chamber of Commerce to discuss the changes in the education system. Subsequent to that breakfast meeting, the minister told the London Free Press that the decision about merging seven London-area boards into two may not be final. The minister hinted that if strong arguments are made against the merger, that may cause substantial changes.

Obviously this is somewhat confusing. Is the minister saying that the maps he published on Monday of the proposed amalgamated boards across Ontario are just proposals that are not final and could be substantially changed, or not?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** It's my pleasure to respond to the question from the member for Algoma because we are very proud of the announcement we made on Monday. We've had a look at the reports that have been done on governance and finance of education, some 24 major reports in my time in the province, and we have come up with, I believe, the right system of education for the future of Ontario. We have reduced the number of trustees from 1,900 to 700; we've cut the number of politicians; we've reduced the number of boards; we've ended duplication; we've ended waste. It's a program and a system that will take us to the future in education and will make sure our resources get to the classroom.

I believe we've got the right boundaries. We have coterminous boundaries wherever possible. We have the right mix, I believe, to respect the historic role of trustees in being guardians of public education and yet to create the efficiencies we need to have to make sure our students' interests are handled well. I believe we have the right size for our education system in the future.

**Mr Wildman:** The comment the minister made, which was quoted in the London Free Press, was: "The decision may not be final. If the minister hears a strong argument as to why the merging of seven London-area boards into two should not proceed, it could change," said Mr Snobelen." If you are proud of the announcement and the maps and you think you have the right boundaries, what did you mean when you hinted this to the London Free Press? Are there going to be changes in the London area, and if so, why not in other areas?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I'd like to refer the member to his comments of yesterday. I respect this chamber, I respect the process and I respect the people in this chamber from all parties. I know we are going to go through second reading with our bill that we introduced on Monday, I know we are going to have public hearings and I know there is going to be input into the bill that we've suggested.

I've said this very clearly: If there are changes that can be made to the legislation we've brought to this floor that improve education for the children of Ontario, I'd be more than willing to have a look at those amendments.



I've said this very clearly too: I will not do that based on mere rhetoric. I want to make sure that any improvements that go into our legislation would actually improve education for the children of this province; not for the bureaucrats, not for the educrats but for the children of this province.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** My question is to the Minister of Labour. The minister has often spoken about the need for employees, employers and other workplace parties to work together in reaching the common goal of making Ontario's workplaces among the safest in the world.

I understand that the \$600-million Toyota plant expansion in Cambridge, which will create 1,200 new jobs, will be opening soon. Toyota Canada has a strong record in the area of occupational health and safety. Could the minister provide the House with some comments in regard to this achievement?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour):** I was very pleased to learn this week that the Toyota plant in Cambridge, which is presently experiencing some construction and has done so since the summer of 1995, had indicated they had proceeded for two million person-hours without a compensable injury. No worker suffered any compensable injury during that time.

The reason for that is because of the leadership that was given by the management at Toyota. They required that each contractor and subcontractor first provide them with a safety plan before they would be allowed to undertake construction work. They also require that each of the employees participates in a safety program. This is the type of self-reliance that we want to encourage in the future.

1510

#### PROVISION OF INFORMATION

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: My point of privilege is with respect to the right of all members of the House to have equal access to materials that are produced by government ministries, as opposed to political parties. In this case, I'm speaking about a package of materials, a binder, which is entitled *Who Does What*, which appears to have been produced by government ministries. There is a copy of that currently sitting on the desk of the member for Hamilton Mountain, and there have been other members of the government caucus who have had those particular briefing notes in their possession.

It is one thing if these materials are produced by caucuses and government parties etc, but if in fact they have been prepared by ministries of government, I believe the rules are very clear that those materials must be made accessible to all members of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr Speaker, I'm wondering if you would undertake to request a copy of those materials and to review that and, if appropriate, to ensure that all members of the Legislature indeed do receive access to those materials.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I don't have any real method of finding out what was produced by who and whatever.

**Ms Lankin:** You could ask.

**The Speaker:** That's a simple one, but the fact remains that I think we're in a bit of a debate today about the Ministry of Finance having some kind of study etc and the opposition looking for that study and so on. I'll give you my undertaking to review the records to see if I have any power to check into that. I'll also check with the government to determine whether it's a caucus briefing note or a ministry briefing note and report back to you. But it's very, very nebulous, I think, in that area.

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: I'd just like to clarify that the document which the member is referring to was produced by the government services bureau and not by the government of Ontario.

**The Speaker:** Okay. So I will not give you my — *Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Okay. Thank you.

#### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

#### QUESTIONS ÉCRITES

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Standing order 97 provides members of the assembly with the right to ask questions of the government ministries. I understand that the standing order goes on to say that once those requests have been filed, the standing order requires that "The minister shall answer such written questions within 14 calendar days unless he or she indicates that more time is required because the answer will be costly or time-consuming or that he or she declines to answer" the question.

On April 24, 1996, I placed order question number 314, an inquiry of the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services asking him to provide the minister's response to each recommendation made by the Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System. I received an interim answer, which was tabled on May 8, 1996. In that interim answer, the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services said that the approximate date on which this information would be available was May 24, 1996. I have still not had that information.

I would ask you, Mr Speaker, to request that the standing orders of this assembly be followed in this regard.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I'll take note and ask the minister to take note as well.

**M. Gilles Bisson (Cochrane-Sud):** Monsieur le Président, sur le même point d'ordre, sous le Règlement de la Chambre on a, comme le député l'a expliqué, un certain ordre, numéro 97, qui dit, «Les députés peuvent faire inscrire au Feuilleton et Avis des questions adressées à des ministres en vue d'obtenir des renseignements sur quelque affaire publique.»

Je ne vais pas lire en détail tout le point d'ordre, mais j'ai besoin de dire pour le record que le gouvernement doit, selon le Règlement, répondre à nos questions dans 14 jours.



Le 9 octobre 1996, j'ai donné une question au ministre des Transports. J'ai demandé une certaine information faisant affaire avec la privatisation des services routières dans la région de Chatham.

Ils m'ont donné un avis le 22 octobre qu'ils pourraient me répondre dès le 1<sup>er</sup> novembre, et on se trouve aujourd'hui au mois de janvier, le 16 janvier —

**The Speaker:** What number is that?

**Mr. Bisson:** C'est la question numéro 561. Quoi qu'il arrive, c'est le 1<sup>er</sup> novembre que j'aurais dû avoir une réponse. On se trouve aujourd'hui, le 16 janvier, avec aucune réponse. J'ai besoin de cette information pour l'oeuvre que je fais comme critique de transports pour les néo-démocrates. Je vous demande de demander au ministre de me donner la réponse que j'ai —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. I will ask the minister to take note.

#### RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: As you know, standing order 36 provides every member of this assembly with the opportunity to present petitions on behalf of the people of the province to this Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It's obviously an extremely important function of a member of the assembly and it's a right which has been exercised for hundreds of years in parliaments of Great Britain and throughout the Commonwealth.

Standing order 36(h) reads: "Within eight sessional days of its presentation, the government shall file a response to a petition with the Clerk of the House and shall provide a copy of the response to the member who presented the petition."

Mr Speaker, I would like to draw to your attention that on November 21, 1996, I presented a petition, I think a very important petition, to this House on the subject of the French Language Services Act, 1986. It was signed by a number of citizens of the province. Obviously they felt that they had justifiable concerns and it was of importance. I believe that as well. They have a right to be concerned, and there's been no response to this date.

I believe their rights have been abridged in not having a response, as have mine as a member, and I would ask that you would look at that order and make an appropriate direction.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I will make the minister aware of such direction.

#### PROVISION OF INFORMATION

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: I wonder if you could help me. As you know, today the Minister of Finance announced the most comprehensive overhaul of property taxation in Ontario certainly in the last 50 years. Subsequent to that, I know the member for Scarborough-Agincourt made a specific request for three impact studies that the Ministry of Finance has done pertaining to the impacts of this new taxation system on property taxpayers.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Just quickly, member for Oakwood, I appreciate the fact that you're asking me to help you. You must give me something a

little more tangible to hang your hat on than that so we can go on. What is it you'd like me to do as Speaker, quickly?

**Mr Colle:** I'd like you to examine as Speaker to see if my rights as a member of this Legislature have been violated. I feel that these studies are not made available to me because the minister has refused to release these impact studies so that I can make a decision on whether this new tax change is beneficial to my constituents. These studies that I've asked for —

**The Speaker:** Order. The difficulty is — and I understand that you came at it similarly to the member for Beaches-Woodbine — the difficulty you're going to put me in as Speaker is that if you rise every time to ask me to vet all these documents that a government works with, or request these documents, I'll be vetting quite a few documents.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** You'll need more staff.

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** Jim will help you vet the documents.

**The Speaker:** Anyway, the fact is, it's not going to happen. The Speaker doesn't have the time nor the wherewithal to vet all these documents that a government works with. It's just something that happens. It has happened in previous administrations. Governments produce reports. They're not obligated to share those reports with everybody. Some are self-contained. Others they in fact share. It's strictly up to the government as to whether or not they deem it necessary or within their power to release these reports.

I, as Speaker, member for Oakwood — and let me be very clear so you don't have to get up again — cannot demand reports to be released and distributed in this Legislature. I can't do that.

**Mr Colle:** Mr Speaker, if I could just have one more comment.

**The Speaker:** Well, okay, that's about as clear as I can be. I'll give you a brief moment to see if there's anything else that you have.

1520

**Mr Colle:** Mr Speaker, there is a specific case. There are three specific studies that have been denied, and the minister has claimed that they are denied to us and to the public because they are cabinet documents that are secret. I can't see —

**The Speaker:** Member for Oakwood, that is the minister's prerogative, if they exist or don't exist. I'm not saying they do or they don't. All I'm telling you, if you'd sit down, is that that's the minister's prerogative. Whether these exist or don't exist, it's their decision, and if they believe it's a cabinet document, that's what they can say. The only alternative left open for you — and I don't want to tell you how to do your job — is that if you file an FOI and that doesn't work, then it just simply doesn't work. I can honestly say that I've been in the exact situation you've been in. There's nothing at all the Speaker can do.

#### RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** Mr Speaker, as you know, section 36 on page 28 of the



standing orders of this place provides, in subsection (a), "A petition to the House may be presented at any time during the session by a member filing it with the Clerk of the House or in the manner set out in clause (b)."

Clause (b), of course, on page 30, says, "A member may present a petition in the House during routine proceedings under the proceeding 'Petitions.' The member may make a brief statement summarizing the contents of the petition and indicating the number of signatures attached thereto."

Under subsection (h) it says, "Within eight sessional days of its presentation, the government shall file a response to a petition with the Clerk of the House and shall provide a copy of the response" —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I'm sorry. You're on the petitions section, section 36?

**Mr Christopherson:** Yes, I am. To provide you with the clarification, it's 36(a) on page 28, subsection (b) on page 30, and I'm now moving to subsection (h), also on page 30. Again, it reads, "Within eight sessional days of its presentation, the government shall file a response to a petition with the Clerk of the House and shall provide a copy of the response to the member who presented the petition."

As you know, given the ongoing attack by this government on workers, the petitions that I submitted on behalf of injured workers and their representatives are extremely important. On October 23, 1996, I presented a petition on behalf of many workers in this province, injured workers and their representatives, regarding the health and safety centre and the occupational health clinics, and I want to advise you, Speaker, that to date I —

**The Speaker:** You have a point of order. I accept your point of order.

**Mr Christopherson:** I haven't made my point of order yet. I haven't made it, Speaker. I didn't say what the problem is.

**The Speaker:** Member for Hamilton Centre, you quoted section —

**Mr Christopherson:** I didn't say what the question is.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** Are you mind-reading, Speaker?

**The Speaker:** I'll tell you, I might be; I just may be.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** He hasn't told you yet.

**The Speaker:** Member for Beaches-Woodbine, I know what his point of order is because —

**Mr Christopherson:** You assumed.

**The Speaker:** No, I didn't assume. Just give me a moment. In the section he quoted, 36, it said that the minister should respond within a two-week period of time. That's his point of order. I can only assume that's your point of order, since you quoted it. What I'm saying to you is: You've raised that; I agree. You have a point of order. I agree with you and I will ask the minister to take note.

#### POWERS OF TRUSTEES

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** Mr Speaker, I want to raise with you a point of privilege which relates to Bill 103. In some ways it relates to the point that the member

for Algoma raised, although it's a very separate point. You will know that we are now in the process of debating Bill 103, the amalgamation bill, and one of the provisions of that bill is to establish a board of trustees. Sections 9 through 15 of the bill set out fairly extensively the establishment of the board of trustees, the powers that those three people would have and the responsibilities. It even goes as far, under section 12, as saying that any of their decisions are not subject to judicial review.

It says in various sections of the legislation that, in effect, virtually every action that's of any significance, certainly any budgetary actions taken by the councils, each of the local councils in Metropolitan Toronto, over the next calendar year will be subject to review and approval by the board of trustees. It's fairly extensive in its establishment and in terms of what they will do. They will have to approve the budgets, they will have to —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Dovercourt, I'm very familiar with the format, if you'd get to your point of order.

**Mr Silipo:** I won't belabour the powers, but it gives three individuals fairly extensive powers —

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** Unelected.

**Mr Silipo:** — three unelected members, putting the elected councils under the powers of these three appointed persons. That is bad enough in and of itself and I would argue undemocratic. I know that there are likely going to be legal challenges to that, so I'm not asking you to rule on whether that particular portion of it is acceptable or not.

**The Speaker:** Could you get to the part you're asking me to rule on?

**Mr Silipo:** What I'm asking you to rule on, Speaker, is a fairly significant point, which is that we know that it is possible for legislation to be established, and I accept that, in a way that has retroactive provisions. The powers set out in this bill for the trustees envision retroactive powers to the time that the bill was introduced, back on December 17.

My point of privilege is that I believe that those powers can only kick into place, those powers can only begin to be exercised, even in their retroactive nature, the moment the bill receives royal assent and not one iota of a second prior to that. That's why it's a very fundamental point, because it relates not only to my privileges as an individual member but fundamentally to the privileges of the Parliament of the province of Ontario.

It's something that I believe you need to reflect upon, to take a look at, because what we are seeing now — and I'd be happy to bring you examples if that's what you need to be able to deal with this issue — are examples of these three individuals. They have been appointed; we all know who they are, which in and of itself is not a problem in terms of the minister indicating who these three people would be who would take on these vast powers. But the problem fundamentally is that these three individuals are in effect today, while the bill is still going through the parliamentary process, before the bill has been approved, before they have been given any power whatsoever, to all intents and purposes, acting as if they had those powers. That's —



**The Speaker:** Member for Dovercourt, if you'd take your seat, I'd like to take your point of order and review it and give it some thought and probably report out when I report out on the previous points of order by the member for St Catharines and the member for Algoma. I don't want to be tied down to a time, but Monday seems to be the day we're shooting for. If it's not, you'll know obviously. I'll try and do the same and report out on your point of order on that same day.

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a point of order, Mr Speaker, that I wish to raise with you, and this comes under standing order 97 in our rule book. You will know that standing order 97 provides that all members in this assembly can request written information from the various ministers regarding information in their ministries.

Under the standing orders, those ministers are to respond to the members who place those questions within a two-week time frame, either to give a full written response or to indicate that there will be a delay and the reason for the delay, or finally to indicate that they're not going to respond at all, in which case that would also appear on the order paper.

On October 16, which was some long time ago, I submitted a question to the Minister of Natural Resources. It appears as order paper question number 587. It was an inquiry of the Ministry of Natural Resources, asking the minister to provide the number of conservation officers who have been laid off as a consequence of the cuts to the ministry according to the ministry's business plan.

It is now well beyond the two-week time frame in which the Minister of Natural Resources was to respond and I would like you to ask him to provide —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I agree you have a point of order. I'll alert the minister.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** Mr Speaker, also a point of order under standing order 97: This issue of the lack of response from ministers is really quite disturbing. The last one I mentioned was for the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services, but this one is an inquiry that I placed on April 24, 1996, asking the Attorney General to advise on the number and percentage of cases that are in the red alert zones and to provide a list of court jurisdictions that are in red alert zones.

There was an interim answer that was tabled on May 6, 1996, and the approximate date that that information was to be available was June 6, 1996. Mr Speaker, this is a current problem. We've all been reading about it in the newspaper. This is information that the minister must have at hand, and I would ask you to urge him to answer.

**The Speaker:** You do have a point of order and I will alert the minister.

1530

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm not going to go into the details of the standing order but, under standing order 97, you know that members have the ability to introduce a

question into the House through an order paper question so that we are able to ascertain answers from the government about particular issues of importance to our constituency or our critic's portfolio. If the answer is not forthcoming within a 14-day period, the government is then obliged by the standing orders, under standing order 97, to give us an answer or to at least let us know when the answer is going to be coming.

I gave such a question on October 22, 1996: order paper question 562. It is an inquiry to the Minister of Transportation. Recently they awarded a contract to a private sector firm for the maintenance of 1,500 kilometres of provincial highways in the Chatham area, and I asked the ministry, "Would the Minister of Transportation provide copies of all three area maintenance contracts, AMC 96-01, AMC 96-02 and AMC 96-03, awarded to Integrated Maintenance and Operations Services Inc.?"

I gave that on October 22. It should have been fairly easy because those contracts are about the province to different people. As transportation critic for the NDP, I would have thought the government would have responded to this earlier. I gave that question in October 22, 1996. They responded to me, interestingly, on November 1, 1996, that it was forthcoming. This particular document is available —

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Order. Your point has been made loud and clear.

### RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. As you know, standing order 36 provides every member of this assembly with the opportunity to present petitions on behalf of the people of the province to this Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It's an extremely important function and responsibility. When people in your constituency come to you, you must, as you know, bring that petition forward. It's a function that has been exercised by members of Parliament for hundreds of years through the parliaments of Great Britain and throughout the Commonwealth.

Standing order 36, section (h) of that standing order, does specify that, "Within eight sessional days of its presentation, the government shall file a response to a petition with the Clerk of the House and shall provide a copy of the response to the member who presented the petition."

I would like to draw to your attention that petition number 153, which was filed by my colleague the member for London Centre on October 21, 1996, with respect to the case of Ms Theresa Vince, has not been responded to and therefore there has been a violation of the standing orders. I would ask that you look into that and make a direction.

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I have noted the sincere concern of the members of the third party, in particular with regard to outstanding questions on the order paper. While we all recognize that the vast



majority of the questions do get responded to, yes, the members of the third party, the NDP in particular, do have some legitimate concerns with regard to questions outstanding.

I undertake on behalf of the government to communicate with each of the members in question with regard to all of the outstanding questions on the order paper and bring it to their attention and insist that they respond at the earliest opportunity to enable this House to get on with the debate this afternoon.

### PROVISION OF INFORMATION

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I hope that you can listen to my point of order before you decide if it is or it isn't, as it's a matter that bothers me quite a bit and I think it affects the opposition side as well. It is this: In the last couple of days I had to answer a number of calls to my office, both in the constituency and at Queen's Park down here, from residents of my area who had been watching the announcements in the House during this current week. It has to do with the repeated announcements in the House by the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing with respect to a decrease in property taxes. They even quoted us 10% some time between now and the year 2000-01.

We have been saying, as I have told callers yesterday and today, that we foresee a tax increase. The problem I have and we have on this side is that while the government side, the ministers, say that taxes are going to go down by 10%, we say we don't believe so. It's not a question of accusing the various ministers of not giving the true facts; it is that the true facts have not been given to us and to myself.

My point of order is this: In order for me, in order for our side to answer the calls from our constituents as to getting the figures and the true facts from the government and the ministers who are saying that taxes are going to go down by 10%, I am asking you, Mr Speaker, to help us get this information, these facts, so we can pass them along to our constituents and verify that indeed taxes will go down or taxes will not go down. Can I call on you, Mr Speaker?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Your point has been made. Thank you.

### RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order regarding section 36(a) and (h), specifically with regard to petitions, and we've already discussed how important they are.

You might recall, Speaker, that on November 28 I presented a petition regarding the reopening of the family support plan regional offices, an issue that's wreaked havoc and devastation on thousands of women and children, and I think is very deserving of a response from this government. I wish to bring to your attention that I have not yet received a response within the time frame outlined in the standing orders and I would ask you, sir, respectfully, to please do everything you can to ensure that my constituents in Hamilton, who have a very

serious concern over this important matter, receive the response they're entitled to.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** I believe you heard the minister a minute ago. He said he would reply to all those demands. I think he said that and I expect the minister will abide by what he has said.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** It's still a point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I just reported it. Thank you. That's it.

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** Mr Speaker, I have a point of order: While I appreciate what the minister has said, I think the point of order I want to raise continues to be that under standing order 97. The rules of this House make it very clear that all members have a right to provide written questions to various ministries regarding matters of public interest and public information, and interest to them in particular as critics.

Mr Speaker, you should know that on October 16 I submitted order paper question number 588 to the Minister of Natural Resources with respect to trying to get information for a very important piece of —

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Thank you. I've listened to your point of order. The minister kindly answered your point of order that measures will be taken to answer your concern. He has said that already. That's the end of it.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** There is a rule. He has not complied. Why should we believe him now?

**The Deputy Speaker:** I've just told you.

### PROVISION OF INFORMATION

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Do you have a point of order, member for Dovercourt? I will listen to your point of order.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** Mr Speaker, I have a different point of order and it relates again back to Bill 103. As you know, we're now going through debate on that bill, and I want to bring to your attention something, which I have to say I probably should have seen earlier, that just recently came to my attention. I want to raise it with you, because it's a very significant departure, I believe, from what the standing orders require.

Standing order 38(c) states that: "On the introduction of a government bill, a compendium of background information shall be delivered to the opposition critics." Those are the key words. "If it is an amending bill, an up-to-date consolidation of the act or acts to be amended shall be delivered to the opposition critics unless the bill amends an act amended previously in the session."

The important words in there are "opposition critics." I want to point out to you that, as the New Democratic Party critic for the greater Toronto area, clearly the person responsible as a critic for Bill 103, I have yet to receive a compendium of background information or indeed an up-to-date consolidation of the act or acts being affected by this change. I think this is a clear infringement of the standing orders, and I ask that you take the necessary steps before the process of resumption of



second reading on the bill proceeds to ensure at least at this point in time that things be put in the right way and that, as the responsible critic for my party, I be given the due consideration that's called upon by the standing orders, which the government has not adhered to.

1540

I don't know, Speaker, if you require any further elaboration of that. I don't know if you caught all of what I was saying, but I was making the point to you that as the critic for the New Democratic Party for the greater Toronto area and therefore the critic responsible for dealing with Bill 103, I have not received the compendium of background information or the consolidation of the act or acts to be amended by Bill 103, which standing order 38(c) clearly says I should receive, not at second reading but at the introduction of a government bill. I don't know what happened, Speaker. I don't know where that copy went.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Take your seat. As far as I'm concerned, the compendium has been distributed. If you didn't receive it, perhaps you could speak to your House leader and ask for one.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** No, the critic is supposed to get it under the rules.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** The House leader and the critic are supposed to get it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** That's what I understand.

**Mr Silipo:** With all respect, sir —

**The Deputy Speaker:** Take your seat for a minute. The critic has it. Ask your critic.

**Mr Silipo:** I'm the critic.

**The Deputy Speaker:** You're the critic and you haven't received it?

**Mr Silipo:** That's the point, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Okay, take your seat. We will make sure. I will ask that a compendium is delivered to you as soon as possible.

**Mr Silipo:** I'm asking you further, Speaker, if I may, that it's not just a question of "as soon as possible." The standing order is very clear. It says, "on the introduction" of a government bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I heard you.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Take your seat for a minute.

As far as I'm concerned, the compendium has been delivered. That's it. If you haven't received it, and that was already in December, I believe, you should have raised the issue at that time, which you didn't. You didn't at that time, so I will entertain another point of order.

**Mr Silipo:** Mr Speaker, if I may, I'm sorry. I should have raised it at what point in time? I'm now being penalized because I didn't read all the points of procedure at the time the bill was introduced?

**The Deputy Speaker:** I think I have just explained to you. I have explained to you very clearly that you should have raised that issue when the compendium was distributed, at that time. You didn't raise it. You should have raised it. It was distributed at that time. If you hadn't received it, I find this extremely difficult to accept.

**Ms Lankin:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: Further to this point of order, I'm concerned about the ruling that you appear to be about to make, because it seems that

you are now placing a time limit and the responsibility on the members of the House to know every rule within the standing orders.

The member has told you, upon reading the standing orders, after he wondered why he had not received this information, he has made himself aware that it was his right under the standing order. Previous to that, he believed it was a courtesy and that the government should have provided those copies to him as a courtesy as the critic. He has now become aware that it was his right under the standing orders. He has referenced that standing order to you.

I don't believe it is appropriate for a Speaker of the House to go on and make on a ruling and say: "You should have known the rules at the time. Because you were unaware of the rules and you didn't raise the issue, now somehow the time limit has expired and you have run out of any right to appeal to the Chair to uphold your rights as a member under the standing orders of this Legislative Assembly."

I would ask you to take a look again at the specific section that the member raises, because it makes it very clear that as a critic he had a right and that right has been violated. The fact that he has only now become aware that it was a right under the —

**The Deputy Speaker:** Take your seat. I think I was very explicit and very clear when I said to you that a compendium was distributed at that time and you should have raised it. That is my ruling and that's it. That is my ruling. That's the end of it.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** That is the end of it. I will now recognize the minister.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** If that's the end of that debate then I'll sit down, but I just wish to assure you, Mr Speaker, and the House that I've been assured by the House leader's office that all of the material has been distributed. If the member, for whatever reason, has lost his copy, then we would be happy to arrange for him to have another copy, but all of the proper distribution was made according to the rules.

**Mr Silipo:** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker —

**The Deputy Speaker:** Take your seat, please. I hope it's very clear that I just made a ruling that the compendium was received by you. It should have been raised —

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. I've made a ruling that you have received it, that it was distributed, that I will not entertain any more this point of order.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** You can't rule that, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I have made the ruling. You don't debate the ruling.

**Mr Silipo:** Point of privilege, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** You have a point of privilege now.

**Mr Silipo:** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: You know better than anybody in this chamber that we are all considered to be honourable members. I would not stand



up in my place and say to you, sir, that I did not receive something which I received.

I also would like you to take a look, please, at the difference there is between the standing order that I recited to you, 38(c), which clearly says that the critics must receive the compendium — not the House leader, not the leader, not anybody else, but the critics — as opposed to another standing order under the rules, 32(c), where we're dealing with ministerial statements. There it says, "Two copies of each ministerial statement shall be delivered to opposition party leaders, or their representatives."

The fact that there is a clear difference in the rules means very clearly that the rules have to be followed, and the rules in this case state that the critics are to be given a copy. For you to say, sir, that I received a copy when I as an honourable member am standing in my place and telling you that I did not receive a copy is an affront to me as an individual member of this assembly and is an infringement on my privilege as a representative for the people of Dovercourt.

**The Deputy Speaker:** We'll try to settle the issue quietly, gently, forcefully if I have to do that. I will take a recess for 10 minutes and I'll come back to you.

*The House recessed from 1547 to 1557.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please take your seats. I would like to clarify my ruling to the effect that this is not the time to raise this point of order. What I meant by this is that if there had been a breach of the standing order relating to introduction and first reading, it should have been raised at that time. Raising it now can have no effect upon introduction and first reading, and it certainly can have no effect upon the continuation of proceedings at second reading. A point of order has to be timely.

Let me say to the member for Dovercourt that even if I agreed with you, I cannot turn the clock back. It has taken place; that's it. That is my ruling.

**Ms Lankin:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: During the exchange, as members of this House were informing you of their opinion with respect to the matter on which you just ruled, the Minister of Health and government House leader made an assertion that a copy of these materials had been hand-delivered to the member for Dovercourt and that perhaps he had lost them. The effect of that was to insinuate that the honourable member was lying, which I believe is unparliamentary, and he should be asked to —

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. I can assure you that the minister didn't have any intention at all of lying.

**Ms Lankin:** How do you know?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Let me assure you, I believe him thoroughly. He is an honourable member, an honourable minister, and I accept what he has said.

**Ms Lankin:** You didn't hear me. I asked for him to withdraw his statement.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Would you like to withdraw, Minister, if you feel it is necessary?

**Hon David Johnson:** Mr Speaker, I was only indicating that the normal distribution had been followed. Indeed, I am assured by staff that compendiums and bills have been provided, as under the standing orders, that it is the procedure to provide to, in addition to the

critics — let's see: "The office also ensures that copies are available to the leader's office in addition."

**Ms Lankin:** Don't make it worse; just withdraw the insinuation.

**Hon David Johnson:** I am not indicating that anybody has lied. I can assure you of that. I am indicating that if anything has run afoul in the system somewhere, we would be happy to provide a second copy. Indeed, if the member wishes a second copy, we'd be happy to provide it. If there's any other offence that's taken place, then I withdraw whatever offence that is.

## RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order related to standing order 36, which provides that every member of the assembly has the opportunity to present petitions on behalf of the people of the province to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

All of us in this House will know that this is an extremely important function of a member and a very important right, a right that has been exercised in the parliamentary system for hundreds of years and indeed goes back to the Magna Carta when the commons and the peers made it clear that they had the right to petition the crown. This is a function that all members have and a right that has been exercised in parliaments, not only in Great Britain and in Canada but throughout the Commonwealth.

Standing order 36(h) reads as follows: "Within eight sessional days of its presentation, the government shall file a response to a petition with the Clerk of the House and shall provide a copy of the response to the member who presented the petition."

Speaker, on December 3, 1996, I submitted a petition opposing reduction in educational funding, number P-128, and as yet I have not received a response, which is well over the eight sessional days stated in the standing order.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I will refer it to the minister.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'll be brief because I know you're aware of the issue, but I do want to place the specific before you so it's not lost in the shuffle.

I introduced petition number 182 regarding our previous government's Bill 40 to this place on November 27, 1996, in which many Ontarians expressed serious concern about the government's denial of rights that workers had with the previous government which have been taken away by this government. I have not yet received a response on behalf of those citizens and I would ask you to ensure that petition number 182 is responded to in a timely fashion, given that it's already well over the time.

**The Speaker:** Just a point of clarification, if I may, from the member for Hamilton Centre. Was that petition ruled in order?

**Mr Christopherson:** I believe it was, Mr Speaker. I don't have that record in front of me, but —

**Interjection:** Looking for a new angle, eh?

**The Speaker:** No, I am not looking for any angle here.

**Mr Wildman:** It's in order. It's right here.



**The Speaker:** Okay, that's all I'm asking. I'm just trying to keep it straight for us, in terms of whether they were in order. That's fine. I will refer —

**Mr Christopherson:** Can I answer your question?

**The Speaker:** I thought you did.

**Mr Christopherson:** Someone else was talking and you were talking to them. I'd like to respond on the record.

**The Speaker:** Member for Hamilton Centre, I thought you said, "I don't know."

**Ms Martel:** Now he does.

**The Speaker:** Now he does know. Okay, member for Hamilton Centre.

**Mr Christopherson:** I can say to you with a fair degree of certainty, Speaker, that petition number 182 was indeed received and recorded because it does have that recorded number.

**Mr Wildman:** Unless the clerk, by mistake, put the number on it.

**The Speaker:** I just asked. I wasn't sure. I thought he said, "I don't know." I apologize if I trampled on your response.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** No. I will say that was my question; it wasn't the clerk's.

#### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I have a point of order, Mr Speaker, with respect to standing order 97. Again, it respects an inquiry of the Attorney General. This inquiry reads as follows:

"Would the Attorney General provide the following information for the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board: statistical monthly reports on the last nine months...: cases settled, types of cases, average award by types of cases, backlog, administrative costs and projected case and administrative costs for the rest of the fiscal year."

This was placed on April 24, 1996. An interim answer was tabled on May 6, 1996, and the approximate date the information was to have been available was June 6, 1996.

Mr Speaker, this particular inquiry is number 353 on the order paper. I would ask that you ask the minister to comply with an answer.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I will refer it to the minister.

#### RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Dovercourt, point of privilege?

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** No, a point of order, Mr Speaker: You will know, I think it's fair to say, that as a result of what is going on with Bill 103, we are all reading and re-reading the rules very carefully to ensure that they are being followed, the standing orders.

**The Speaker:** I've noticed that, actually, yes.

**Mr Silipo:** As we do that, we discover that there are continuing breaches of the standing orders. I want to point out to you one further breach of standing order 36. That's the standing order, as you know, which provides that every member of the assembly has the opportunity to

present petitions on behalf of the people of the province, and certainly I have taken advantage of that on occasion to present petitions in this House. It's an extremely important function, which I don't have to tell you goes back years and years in our parliamentary tradition.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Silipo:** In fact, it goes about as far back as the Magna Carta, Speaker. You're quite right on that.

The important breach here has been of the provision that says under standing order 36(h), "Within eight sessional days of its presentation, the government shall file a response to a petition with the Clerk of the House and shall provide a copy of the response to the member who presented the petition."

It has not been adhered to in one particular case that I want to draw to your attention. That was back on December 4, 1996, petition number P-179 standing in my name, dealing with the amalgamation of the six municipalities within Toronto, very much related to Bill 103, and it has yet to be responded to, Speaker. I'm sure you will draw that to the appropriate minister's attention and ensure that I get a response in a timely fashion.

**The Speaker:** I will do that.

#### LE RÉGLEMENT STANDING ORDERS

**M. Gilles Bisson (Cochrane-Sud) :** J'ai un point de privilège, Monsieur le Président, si vous allez me donner deux secondes. C'est un point d'ordre et je vais être bien clair.

Sous la section 21, et les autres dans la Chambre peuvent lire :

«Les privilèges sont les droits dont jouissent les membres de l'Assemblée législative, collectivement et individuellement, en vertu de la Loi» — la clé sur mon point — «sur l'Assemblée législative et d'autres lois, ou en vertu de la pratique, des précédents et des usages.»

Aujourd'hui, comme vous le savez, on est en train de faire sûr que le gouvernement suit le Règlement faisant affaire avec la manière de laquelle la Chambre déroule et que les Règlements sont bien suivis. J'ai ici, comme tous les membres, mon petit livre, qui est le Règlement de la Chambre législative de l'Ontario. Quand j'ai regardé, j'ai vu que la Loi sur l'Assemblée de l'Ontario n'est plus en place de la manière que c'était imprimé dans nos livres.

L'année passée on a fait des changements sur le salaire des députés. On a passé une loi dans cette Chambre, et en ce temps une nouvelle loi a été imprimée pour nous laisser savoir exactement ce que dit la loi. Dans les feuillets présentement, c'est la loi qui était en vigueur il y a un an ; les changements n'ont pas été donnés directement aux membres de l'Assemblée.

Le dernier point —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Before you continue, this isn't standing-orders-specific; this is a courtesy binder offered to each member of the Legislature. If it is outdated or not kept up to date, it's not a point of order.

**M. Bisson :** J'ai un point de privilège, Monsieur le Président, et je ne vais pas prendre trop de temps. Je pensais que c'était un point d'ordre parce j'ai sous point



d'ordres des points de privilège. Mon point est que j'aimerais avoir ce projet de loi imprimé dans mon cahier législatif ici à l'Assemblée. Est-ce que je pourrais vous demander de vous rassurer que le greffier responsable de la Chambre fasse à ce que ce projet de loi est imprimé est mis dans nos livres en Chambre pour faire sûr que la loi elle-même —

**The Speaker:** Yes, I will tell him.

**M. Bisson :** Merci beaucoup.

**The Speaker:** You're welcome.

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### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It's regrettable that this afternoon we have to raise with you any number of breaches of the standing orders on the part of the government, but I have to raise another one with you and I have to ask for your intervention with another minister of the crown with respect to a written order paper question.

You will know that under standing order 97 I and all my colleagues have a right to request written information from the ministries of this assembly, and you should know that on November 21 order paper question number 719 was filed with the Ministry of Environment. At that time I specifically asked the Minister of Environment if "the number of people employed by the Ministry of Environment and Energy in the mid-Ontario office in the Sudbury region that have been laid off as a consequence of ministry cuts according to the ministry's business plan" could be provided to me.

You will know that the minister has two weeks under the standing orders to reply either with a full response to the question or an interim response outlining which date I will receive a full reply, or also the minister has an option of writing into the order paper that a reply will not be forthcoming.

With respect to order paper question 719, I was advised by the Minister of Environment and Energy that a final answer could not be made available in the two-week time frame; however, a final answer would be available to me on or about December 11, 1996. We are well beyond that time —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I appreciate that. I will refer that to the minister.

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think every member in this House recognizes that the ministers of the crown have been extraordinarily busy these past few weeks with the Who Does What work, and we're seeing that now in legislation. I too would like to draw to your attention the outstanding questions that have been posed to the various ministers. They would be questions 314, 341, 342, 344, 345, 346, 348, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 574, 582, 583, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 649, 650, 651, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 673, 678, 679, 694, 695, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 711, 712, 713, 720, 721, 722, 723, 726, 727, 728, 741, 742, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766. I would encourage you to refer to the relevant ministers the need to

reply and I would of course also remind you, Speaker, that it would be inappropriate to deal with a matter twice and hopefully that will bring to an end any debate pursuant to standing order 23(a).

**The Speaker:** I'd better rule on his. I accept that fact and I will refer all those to the appropriate ministers.

### RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Further to my rights and those of my constituents under 36(a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g) and specifically (h) with regard to petitions, I know your personal concern and commitment to the health and safety of workers in Ontario is such that you would also want me to receive on their behalf a response to a petition that I presented on behalf of many Ontario workers and their representatives, asking and imploring and pleading with this government not to make changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, nor to erode the rights of workers any further, given what they've already done.

I would point out to you, Speaker, that petition number 162 was presented by me on behalf of those Ontarians on November 19, 1996. To date I have not yet received a response. Again, given the importance of this issue, the rights under the standing orders for us to receive a response, I would ask you to use your good office and implore you to please get a response to this very important issue.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you very much. I will refer that to the minister. Member for London Centre.

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** Mr Speaker, under standing order 97 there is a question that I referred to the Minister of the Attorney General on April 24, 1996. That question was: "Would the Attorney General provide a list of organizations who are or will be receiving funding from the community fund program for projects related to victims of crime. Please include how much money each organization is receiving."

As I said, Mr Speaker, I submitted that on April 24, 1996 —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I need the number.

**Mrs Boyd:** Number 345, Mr Speaker, and I do not believe I heard it dealt with in the previous point.

**The Speaker:** I'm going to say that 345 — I don't honestly remember whether he called 345.

**Mrs Boyd:** It's our privilege to have these called.

**The Speaker:** I appreciate that. I'm going to assume that page 23 maybe he missed, because I was going through carefully and he might have missed page 23. I will allow that one to be put, but the ones beyond that, he definitely put.

### RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker, with respect to standing order 36,



which you know provides every member of the Legislative Assembly with the right to submit a petition on behalf of the people to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and of course this is a very important right to be exercised by members that has been exercised in parliaments in Britain and throughout the Commonwealth over hundreds of years: Standing order 36, specifically under section (h), which I know you would know, sets out that within eight sessional days of its presentation here in the Legislative Assembly, "the government shall file a response to a petition with the Clerk of the House and shall provide a copy of the response to the member who presented the petition."

Mr Speaker, I would like to draw to your attention with respect to petition number 153 that was tabled by my colleague the member for London Centre on October 31, 1996, with respect to the case of Ms Theresa Vince, that it has not been responded to. I would ask that you would look into that and give a direction with respect to that.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I will refer the minister.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I understand that the current concerns being raised by the opposition are under standing order 36. Is that the —

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** Some are, some aren't.

**Mrs Marland:** Okay. Under standing order 36(g), it says that, "The period for 'petitions' shall be limited to 15 minutes." So I would ask you to rule whether —

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** We're not in petitions.

**Mrs Marland:** Excuse me. I thought the points of order were being raised under standing order 36.

**The Speaker:** The member for Mississauga South, just take your seat for one moment. We're not actually in petitions at this point in time. They would be limited to 15 minutes if we were in petitions, but we're not there yet, and until I get there, I can't run the clock at 15 minutes.

**Mrs Marland:** My point, Mr Speaker, is that the subject that is being dealt with is petitions. Correct?

**The Speaker:** Yes, sometimes it's a petition. Other times it's under section 97, I think, letters that they've written to the —

**Mr Silipo:** Point of questions.

**The Speaker:** Point of questions, right — questions. So these things are things that they're dealing with under points of order, but it only happens to be they're talking about it. It doesn't mean we're actually in the petitions stage at this point in time.

**Mrs Marland:** If I may just finish my point of order, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Okay, go ahead.

**Mrs Marland:** I'm not questioning the raising of — they have raised the concern that they have not received answers to their order paper questions. All those order paper questions have now been referred to by another member and you have assured that they will be referred to the appropriate ministers. My point is that the period for petitions, as written in our standing orders under section 36(g), shall be limited to 15 minutes. I would

suggest to you that whether we're dealing with the tabling of petitions or the questioning about there being no response to those petitions, it still comes under petitions, which (g) precedes (h) in our standing orders under standing order 36.

1620

**The Speaker:** I appreciate the point you're trying to make. I think you're putting too fine a point on it. I don't see the relationship between (g) and (h), other than (h) follows (g). It says clearly a 15-minute period of time for petitions. Then it subsequently says that, "Within eight sessional days of its presentation, the government shall file a response to a petition with the Clerk of the House and shall provide a copy of the response to the member who presented the petition."

The opposition is simply asking for these responses that haven't been made. They're not making new petitions; they're not standing in their place representing to make new petitions. They're simply requesting that previous petitions, properly put and accepted by the table and the House, need to be answered. To me, it's not the same.

## WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** Mr Speaker, I'd like to raise a point of order on what happened with the member for Scarborough East when he stood in his place, read all of the outstanding order paper questions and said that he deems that these have now been referred to the minister. I have some very serious concerns about that. What you really have is a conflict of interest. You have a member of the government side standing up and making a decision on questions that have been asked by opposition parties. If that were to stand, then on any given day a member could stand up and say, "I deem that we don't have to really answer them, because I've now referred it."

It would seem to me the purpose of anyone "using" 97, and I use the quotations legitimately, would be that they have a genuine concern for a question they personally asked or forwarded to the ministry. For someone else to stand up and say, "We deem that they've all been received and been referred to the minister," I think really usurps the role of the member of the opposition who originally asked that the minister respond to this written question.

I think it is really inappropriate for a member of the government side to take on that responsibility, because it is really the government that has been asked to respond to these questions. It's a very difficult situation.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Point of order, Mr Speaker, related to —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I would just like to respond quickly, and if you have a related point of order, I will go to you.

The difficulty is that the practice of this place has been that any member may stand and refer, ask, request that any order paper question be referred to the minister or alerted time has run out. So if we were to take that approach, then quite often in the past a member of the Liberal caucus who was standing in your place couldn't



have stood and done exactly the same thing. So by precedent and practice we have allowed other members to stand in their place and request referral of order paper questions to ministers.

Since we're all equals in this place, it stands to reason that government members would be allowed to do the same thing. That's why it would be difficult to rule that that is in fact out of order, when in practice, I myself as Speaker and quite a number of Speakers, I assume, in the past — I know the previous Speaker, Speaker Warner, allowed others to stand and refer order paper questions.

**Ms Lankin:** Point of order.

**Hon Rob Sampson (Minister without Portfolio [Privatization]):** Mr Speaker, point of order.

**The Speaker:** I have just a point of order on this side here, sorry, and then —

**Hon Mr Sampson:** I appreciate the chance to perhaps raise this point of order. Rule 30 in our standing orders is subheaded "Order of routine proceedings." It reads, "The routine proceedings before the orders of the day are as follows," and then it lists "members' statements, statements by the ministry and responses, oral questions, motions, petitions, reports by committees and introduction of bills."

Mr Speaker, I wonder if you could rule where exactly we are, according to rule 30?

**The Speaker:** Sure. Right where we are is, if you see that blank space between "Oral questions" and "Motions," we are in that abyss there. At this time, until I get to motions, we've concluded oral questions, but until I actually state "Motions," then we will not be in —

**Hon Mr Sampson:** Mr Speaker, with all due respect to that ruling, I don't know how you could rule that we're in a particular routine proceedings segment that doesn't exist in accordance with our orders. Either we are or we are not in one of those segments. I don't know how you can rule, with all due respect, that we're not operating —

**The Speaker:** The point that needs to be made is that a point of order is in order at any time.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Let me finish, member for Mississauga West. A point of order is always in order. If a member stands on a point of order and we happen to be between two points of routine proceedings, it doesn't mean that point of order is not in order. A point of order is always in order and until it is dealt with and dispensed with, we may not move on. Although I think I understand what you're driving at and I appreciate where you're going, the fact remains that as long as a member stands on a point of order, which I must deal with, which is legitimately before the Legislature — this House — there is little I can do to move on to motions.

If you find yourself in a quandary about being between oral questions and motions, I understand, but there's little, if anything, the Speaker can do about it. Now I'm going to move on.

**Ms Lankin:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: This is a related point of order, but comes at it in a slightly different way. Actually, I appreciate the point you make that any member can rise and either refer a question or ask for your ruling with respect to a petition that's

unanswered on behalf of anyone who has submitted in this House. I both accept and agree with that ruling.

The concern I have is in response to a point of order by the member for London Centre with respect to an order paper question. I think it was number 344; I'm not sure which one she posed. You said you thought perhaps that one hadn't been referred by the member for Scarborough East, but that all the ones on pages after that had been, that you were looking at them fairly closely. I don't want to challenge your memory with respect to all those numbers that he rattled off very quickly, but watching at the time the scramble to catch up with the member, I think it would be fair to say there is great confusion among all honourable members and perhaps even the table and the Chair with respect to which ones have been referred or not.

I actually believe that as a member my right to ensure that an order paper question that I have put, or perhaps one of my colleagues has put, is appropriately referred to a minister for action, where they have already violated the standing orders, would be appropriate. We are at this point in time unable to know whether or not that has been done. So there may be some confusion around this.

I would just ask for your lenience in terms of allowing us to pursue some of the ones we want to draw to your attention. You may, on some, be sure they've been dealt with. I suspect there's some confusion and until there is a Hansard record it will be difficult for us to ascertain which. I would just ask for your lenience if we inadvertently duplicate some of them, because it would be without full knowledge or any awareness of that action; certainly without any intent.

**The Speaker:** To the member for Beaches-Woodbine, I appreciate the point you're making. I did follow it fairly closely, and I'll tell you, I know there were a couple that were missed in my mind as I followed it. Since I guess there can be no other person to rely on than myself — and I followed it closely. I'm not sure if he started on page 23 because it was a bit of a scramble, but I know of a couple he missed. All I can tell you is that I think I have a very clear understanding of which ones he moved and which ones he didn't, and I leave it up to you to determine which they were.

**Ms Lankin:** We will try.

**The Speaker:** I understand. I appreciate that.

## RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order under section 36(a) through (h), with emphasis on (h), in terms of response to petitions in a timely fashion as set out in the standing orders of this Legislature.

I wish to bring to your attention, Speaker, that on November 4, 1996, I presented a petition in this place on behalf of francophones in Ontario who are very concerned about their rights under the French Language Services Act, 1986, and the petition outlined those concerns. It was signed by many Ontarians on a matter that is crucially important to the francophone community here in Ontario. Given that importance — to all the members of this House, I would think, as in many ways



we like to think this is a non-partisan issue because it's dealing with such fundamental human rights — I would ask that you intercede with the minister to ensure that I receive a response on behalf of the francophones who signed that petition.

1630

#### SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** A point of privilege?

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** No, order. I don't know why you think that every time I stand up it's a point of privilege, Speaker. It's just a point of order. Sometimes it is, but this time it's a point of order.

Mr Speaker, this is on a very different point of order. It goes back to a ruling you made, I think back in December, though I could be wrong, relating to the members of the presiding office — yourself, the Deputy Speaker and the other two officers — with respect to being in the chamber and wearing the attire you wear when you're sitting in the chair. The member for Perth, who is one of those presiding officers, is now in the chamber wearing the significant part of the attire, the bib. I think that's contrary to the ruling or the undertaking you gave at that time. I would ask you, if I'm correct in that, to —

**The Speaker:** I think the ruling I made at the time was that if the member were in the chamber he wouldn't take part in debate if he was in the Speaker's attire. I don't believe the member for Perth has taken part in debate, and I think he gave me his undertaking as well. That's, I think, what I gave my undertaking for.

#### POINTS OF ORDER

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We realize that the points of order have gone all afternoon, and I'm sure anybody watching on the television knows precisely what is happening here today.

I'm quoting from Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms. This is clause 346 on page 107, "Routine Proceedings." This clause indicates, "The use of dilatory tactics during routine proceedings can be an abuse, and the Speaker may, after consideration of the specific circumstances, permit motions which would end such an abuse."

Mr Speaker, I would put that clause to you at this point and ask that I, as the House leader, may be permitted to raise a motion that we do indeed proceed to introduction of bills. I would ask you to make that ruling.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** On the same point of order, Mr Speaker: If I caught the words correctly, the government House leader said, in reading from Beauchesne, "The use of dilatory tactics...can be an abuse." I would say to you that yes, that could be true. Obviously, that's within your realm to rule on. I would say to you, sir, that the guide in that should be, is there anything in the actions taken by members of the House that constitutes that kind of delay? As long as we are raising and as long as members of the House are raising legitimate points of order —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I appreciate your point of order. Allow me to rule. I don't want to take too long on this one. I'm trying to find it, actually. Oh, here it is, 346: "Dilatory tactics during routine proceedings can be an abuse, and the Speaker may, after consideration of the specific circumstances, permit motions which would end such an abuse."

To the House leader, the difficulty that I as Speaker have is that all these points of order they're raising are in fact legitimate and in order. Now, I appreciate the fact that there's a process taking place here, and I understand what's going on. If they were standing in their place on improper points of order or simply adjourning and ringing the bells, I may have a leg to stand on with respect to this particular reading in Beauchesne, but quite frankly I have not ruled a single point of order out of order yet. Every one of them has been factual, it's been in order and I've had to deal with it as an orderly approach.

If members in the opposition are standing in their place on points of order and have legitimate points of order, I think it would ill behoove the Speaker to begin to say that this is a dilatory stalling tactic if that were the case, and since it is, I can't see any reason why I would invoke this 346.

**Hon David Johnson:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: With respect to your ruling, I would just add, as the government House leader, I have indicated that in terms of the outstanding questions on the order paper, in terms of the petitions, I would endeavour to contact each and every one of the ministries involved and the ministers involved. I wonder if that would not cover the concern of the opposition members in terms of addressing those issues.

I think we all recognize in this House, whether it was the previous government, the NDP government, whether it was the previous government to that, the Liberal government, or whether it's the present or former Progressive Conservative governments, that at any point in time there always are outstanding questions on the order paper. We all know that here. We all know there are outstanding petitions, no matter which government is in power. If the government gives an undertaking to pursue those, I would think, considering the circumstances, considering the history, considering the fact that this is not abnormal, that should deal with the issue for reasonable people.

**The Speaker:** To the government House leader, it's something that you will have to decide among you. It's not up to the Speaker to decide whether proper points of order could be satisfied by agreement. That's a decision that those parties have to get together and make. I can only stand here and recognize people with points of order who are properly in order. If they are, I don't consider it dilatory. If you feel that you can satisfy their concerns, then I make the suggestion that you go and meet with them and satisfy their concerns. It's certainly not up to me to determine whether a government or opposition party is satisfied.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Just on the point of order raised by the government House leader, I think the emphasis from



the point of view of the opposition is on the fact of how important it is to get the responses to the written questions in an expeditious manner. It's because we often utilize this information for further purposes in question period or in debate. We don't have immediate access to all of the information the government has; one vehicle which I find to be very helpful to the opposition is the vehicle of the written question.

Our oral question period is limited to one hour. It means that each of the parties has approximately one third of the questions, the opposition a little more than the governing side in terms of questions, so we have to utilize the written question in order to obtain information. Also, the Speaker wisely has ensured that the questions are limited to approximately one minute — I think that's the approximate time when he asks that the question be put — and he has also limited the answers that are provided by members of the government. That's most helpful as well that you do that, but you will understand then, Mr Speaker, why it is important that to get detailed answers, we put questions on the order paper and we have to get those answers back in an expeditious manner.

**The Speaker:** Thank you for your interjection, member for St Catharines. I will refer the government members to the 35th Parliament, first session. We were very much in the same situation at that time, when the then House leader, Ms Martel, addressed then Speaker Warner: "I respectfully request your ruling that you as Chair have an inherent discretionary authority to refuse to put the question on a dilatory motion where in your opinion such motion is an abuse of the procedures of the House." Of course, at that time Speaker Warner ruled in favour of the opposition and against the government. It seems to be a very similar situation at this time, and in fact the ruling I just made is consistent with that of Speaker Warner.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Point of order.

**The Speaker:** I'm going to the member for Sudbury East, actually.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I should say I remember that ruling. For the benefit of the government members, the opposition said, "If the government had complied with the rules, we wouldn't be here," so that's what I'm going to say to the government House leader. I appreciate his offer of assistance, but it is true that if the government had complied with the standing orders, we wouldn't be doing this this afternoon.

So, Mr Speaker, I need to raise a point of order with you here this afternoon. It is of course under standing order 97 with respect to the ability of members to receive written responses to questions which are posed to ministers and the time frame in which we are supposed to receive written answers to those same questions.

1640

Mr Speaker, you should know that on October 16, I asked the Minister of Natural Resources the following question: "Would the Minister of Natural Resources provide the number of jobs that have been lost and how many person-years have been cut from the person-hours originally attached to positions for a conservation office."

**The Speaker:** What number would that be?

**Ms Martel:** Speaker, this was order paper question 589.

**The Speaker:** I do remember vividly the member for Scarborough East calling 589.

Point of order, the member for Algoma.

**Mr Wildman:** Thank you, Speaker. I just wanted to make the point that in this particular situation, and I know whereof I speak, having served in this House in another capacity, the government is the author of its own misfortune today because it hasn't complied with the rules.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** Point of order, Mr Speaker: I put a question under section 97 of the rules on April 24, 1996, and I still have not had an answer, although one was promised for June 6. That question was regarding asking the Attorney General to provide a list of transfer payments and grants.

**The Speaker:** The third party, just begin, cite the order number you're saying and then the number.

**Mrs Boyd:** This is on page 23.

**The Speaker:** Okay, go ahead.

**Mrs Boyd:** The question was, "Would the Attorney General provide a list of transfer payments and grants (names of organizations and the dollar amount) that will be reduced or eliminated as part of the interim report on business planning and cost savings measures in 1996-97 and 1997-98."

As I say, that was placed on April 24. An interim answer was tabled May 6, 1996, and at that time the approximate date the information was to be available was June 6.

**The Speaker:** I will alert the minister.

On a point of order, the member for Scarborough East.

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** There is some doubt about whether or not every number of the outstanding questions was raised, Mr Speaker, so I guess I'll have to do it again.

**The Speaker:** Member for Scarborough East, the point of order, if you'd sit down, please, I don't want you to be in a situation where there was any question about whether you called all the numbers. My problem was that I had to follow you calling all the numbers and I can't guarantee you that I heard you call all the numbers. So if —

**Mr Gilchrist:** I would be pleased to do it again more slowly.

**The Speaker:** Well, again, that's what you can do, if you'd like. The member for Scarborough East.

**Mr Gilchrist:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I know that the third party has trouble with numbers. That's why we overspent by \$10 billion a year.

The questions were 314, 341, 342, 344, 345, 346, 348 — 353 had already been raised by Ms Martel — 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 574, 582, 583, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 649, 650, 651, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 673, 678, 679, 694, 695, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 711, 712, 713 — 719 has already been raised by the third party — 720, 721, 722, 723, 726, 727, 728, 741, 742, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, and of course the very popular question 768.

All of those I trust you would refer to the relevant minister with our strongest recommendation that as soon



as their schedules permit in this busy time period, they can get an answer to those questions, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** I'll refer those to the appropriate ministers.

## RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to rise on a point of order with respect to standing order 36. As you know, that standing order provides every member of the Legislative Assembly with the opportunity to present a petition on behalf of the people of Ontario to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It's an extremely important function of a member of provincial Parliament and one which has been exercised for hundreds of years in both the British Parliament and throughout the Commonwealth.

Standing order 36(h), I know you are aware, reads as follows, "Within eight sessional days of its presentation" — that being the petition — "the government shall file a response to a petition with the Clerk of the House and shall provide a copy of the response to the member who presented the petition."

Mr Speaker, I would like to draw to your attention that with respect to petition 153, filed by my colleague from London Centre on November 18, 1996, with respect to the case of Ms Theresa Vince, there has been no reply and therefore there's been a breach of the standing orders, and I would ask that you would look into that and direct a response.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Done.

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I too believe it's very important that the petitions that were sent in to us from people across this province do in fact get answered. I would draw to your attention a summary of all of the outstanding petitions, according to the Clerk's office, effective literally five minutes ago; they just posted a new update. Those would be petitions P-15, P-25, P-27, P-33 — have you got them all so far? — P-33, P-40, P-80, P-91, P-93, P-95, P-103, P-108, P-118, P-120, P-121, P-125, P-128 —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Gilchrist:** I'm coming to that — P-129, P-139, P-140, P-144, P-145, P-146, P-148 —

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** Bingo.

**Mr Gilchrist:** — P-156, P-157, P-160 —

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** There is no "p" in bingo.

**Mr Gilchrist:** Your man said, "Bingo" — P-162, P-164, P-165, P-166, P-167, P-170, P-175, P-176, P-179, P-180, P-182, P-184, P-185, P-188, P-194, P-195, P-196, P-198, P-199 and P-200.

Mr Speaker, this is directly from the Clerk's office and I would draw to the attention of the member for Beaches-Woodbine that the petition to which she just alluded, P-153, was in fact responded to on January 6. The numbers I have read off, according to the Clerk's office, represent all outstanding petitions. I would encourage you to get the relevant ministers to respond as soon as possible to these outstanding concerns.

**The Speaker:** I will undertake to send that to the relevant ministers and ask them to respond.

1650

**Ms Lankin:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I appreciate the member's update, as he said this was the new list that has been filed within the last five minutes, and I certainly expect I'll have a copy of that being sent to me so I can review that. But I want to indicate from the initial update I have that there has been information provided to you in this point of order that is not complete and correct, and it leaves us a little bit confused.

For example, with respect to P-118, which the member indicated had not been responded to, I know that petition P-118, on the Workers' Health and Safety Centre occupational health clinics, tabled on July 11 by my colleague Mr Christopherson, was responded to on June 25, 1996.

So there is a variety of information. You have not been given the full information, Mr Speaker, and for clarification I think it would be important for us to be able to raise specific petitions on specific dates; in fact it is our right as members to be able to put forward that information to you.

The member has put forward some blanket information which is not complete and/or correct, as I have pointed out, and which is confusing, so I think we're no further ahead in this respect. Mr Speaker, I will leave that with you. I believe there are some other points that other members want to raise.

**Mr Gilchrist:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: With reference to petition P-118, there were three further submissions of that petition, on December 10, December 16 and December 19, which have not been responded to. I will be pleased to table with the clerk —

**Mr Wildman:** Why not?

**Mr Gilchrist:** I guess you'll have to wait to see the minister's reply.

The Speaker has already given his undertaking. Mr Speaker, if it assists in any way to give you or the clerks' table this compendium so that the matter is addressed once and for all, the specific dates and the specific petitions —

**The Speaker:** It doesn't help.

As far I'm concerned, to respond to the member for Beaches-Woodbine, if you can provide for me a petition that has not been referred to by the member for Scarborough East, then it is fully in order, but if you're standing in your place providing to me petitions that have been moved properly and dealt with, you're out of order.

**Ms Lankin:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. In that regard, to make my point that some of the information is confusing, the member opposite just listed three petitions under P-118 which he says have not been responded to. I would like to draw to your attention, Mr Speaker, that under standing order 36, which you know is the matter we're dealing with, the tabling of petitions, and under section (h), that they be responded to in eight days, according to the information I have in front of me, and I would like you to check into this, there was a petition under P-118 tabled by my colleague Mr Christopherson on November 19, 1996, which was not one of the three the member just referred to, and which has not been responded to as of today when I stood to raise this point of order.



Mr Speaker, I believe the member has confused matters more. He says there are three; I have two others. It would behoove us, in some of these areas where there is confusion, to be able to raise with you those examples. I have just tabled that one and I would ask that you check into that, and if I'm correct that it has not been responded to, to order that it be so responded to.

**The Speaker:** Reading item 36, it seems to me that P-118 is the same petition and it has been given on different days. One petition has been responded to and the ones subsequently maybe have not been responded to. Having the member for Scarborough East move 118 will universally cover those that you're suggesting haven't been responded to.

I'm saying to the members of the third party, it's come to the point in time now where if you have petitions that haven't been responded to, I'm ready, willing and able to hear them, but you're not in order if you stand and simply talk about the exact same petition that was given at a future date. Okay?

**Ms Lankin:** But there was confusion there. Do you accept that?

**The Speaker:** Let me just say this. I accept that there was some confusion between the member for Scarborough East, possibly, and the member for Beaches-Woodbine, but from my take on the issue, I just don't believe there's any confusion at all.

**Mr Wildman:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Perhaps you could help me. The standing orders are quite clear, as you are aware, in terms of petitions and the length of time it takes to answer a petition. That's true also of the order paper questions. In both cases, I understand that the minister has the option of tabling an interim answer, saying that they can't give the answer now but that the answer will be available by such-and-such a date. In some cases ministers have done this with those that are outstanding and in some cases they haven't.

My question is, what is the procedure for members who have properly presented petitions on behalf of their constituents, citizens of Ontario, to the House and to the government when the government doesn't comply with the rule? Now we have the member for Scarborough East getting up and reading out a long list, essentially admitting that the government, yes indeed, has not complied with the rules but that it will, but he does not give us any date by which the government will comply with the rule. How many days? The rule says eight sessional days. The member for Scarborough East has admitted that the government hasn't lived up to the rule, yet he has not given us any date by which time the government will comply with the rule —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, member for Algoma. I'm not quite sure that's a point of order; a point of frustration, possibly. I understand the point you're making, but you know what? They're not out of order for the time they're taking. Well, they are out of order, but you can bring it to my attention. You've done just that. That's all that's in the rule book.

**Mr Bisson:** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: Just to set this up, you would know that every member of the assembly is entitled to a budget to run his or her constituency office to do the work we do within our constitu-

ency. Late last year there was a mixup in a bill that was sent to my office for something that was purchased in the budget year 1995-96. This will only take a minute, Speaker. I put in a written submission at the time to the previous Speaker, asking the Speaker to take a look at this to see if it would be allowed that the item be paid in the following budget year, as it wasn't my fault that the item had not been paid for. Because there was a mixup from the supplier —

**The Speaker:** I've got to say, member for Cochrane South, I'm really having a difficult time reaching out for the standing order you're standing on and the point of order you're making.

**Mr Bisson:** It's on a point of privilege.

**The Speaker:** Okay, the point of privilege you're making. Whatever, if you could drive this one home, I'd appreciate it.

**Mr Bisson:** If you give me 30 seconds, I'll get to the point. What happened was that there was an item purchased on last year's budget. There was a mixup from the supplier in getting the bill to the finance branch to be paid. I took every step I could to get that done. It didn't. The point I'm getting to — and I'm just at it, if you give me a second. I know the Clerk is trying to give you some advice, but you will see. What happened is that I sent a letter to the former Speaker asking him to take a look at this matter.

**The Speaker:** Yes, I know that.

**Mr Bisson:** I never got a response to it. A subsequent letter was sent, to which I again haven't got a response. I'm wondering, if I can get you a copy of that letter on Monday next, if you would be able to look into that matter for me —

**The Speaker:** That's not even close to a point of order.

**Mr Bisson:** A point of privilege.

**The Speaker:** A point of privilege, a point of order, a point of interest. That's nothing. I don't want to deal with that. Anything else?

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: With regard to my rights under 36(a) and (h), a petition number that was not listed — I would ask you to check the list you received. Petition number 121 was —

**The Speaker:** Yes, it was listed.

**Mr Christopherson:** I'm sorry; 122. You're correct. My mistake.

**The Speaker:** Yes, 122 was not listed.

**Mr Christopherson:** Petition number 122: On November 5 I tabled a petition again further to the concerns that many Ontarians have about the French Language Services Act, 1986.

**The Speaker:** It was responded to July 29.

Motions.

**Mr Bisson:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

1700

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** No, no. I'll tell you, I don't want to get into this debate again like the other day. I stood here and I said it was responded to on —

*Interjections.*



**The Speaker:** Members for Cochrane South and Beaches-Woodbine and St Catharines, I went to the member for Hamilton Centre and I said it was responded to on the date. I looked, there was no one standing. I said, "Motions," so we're in motions. If you want to go to a point of order, that's fine. Point of order, member for Cochrane South.

**Mr Bisson:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The rules of the House are very clear when it comes to a member raising a point of order. I agree with you that you found that the point of order on behalf of the member for Hamilton Centre had been dealt with and you read back the number. The member was still on his feet and I was waiting to raise further another point of order in regard to standing orders 23(h) and (i).

You did not give me the opportunity to even get up. I know I am not able to take the floor so long as you are standing or another member of the Legislative Assembly has the floor. As I looked over, and he's only two seats away from me, the member for Hamilton Centre had the floor, was on his feet. You then stood in order to say that the particular item had been dealt with. You were still on your feet. I didn't even get a chance to get back up again, because you had never sat again.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It relates back to the same standing order that we've been discussing, standing order 36(h), and a further petition that has not been replied to. I believe that's an appropriate point of order.

**The Speaker:** You're at a petition that has not been responded to?

**Mr Silipo:** Yes.

**The Speaker:** I just want to be clear to the opposition that we are in motions.

**Mr Silipo:** Yes.

**The Speaker:** You understand. Okay.

**Mr Silipo:** As you said earlier, points of order are appropriate at any point as long as they are legitimate points of order. I want to draw to your attention a further breach of standing order 36(h), which provides for a reply to a petition within eight sessional days of its presentation, particularly with respect to petition P-119, which I understand has not been replied to.

That's standing in the name of Mr Marchese, filed on June 10, 1996, regarding cuts to housing, abolishing user fees and maintaining current levels of funding for programs and social services. It has not been responded to, and I would ask, Speaker, that you draw that to the relevant minister's attention.

**The Speaker:** I will caution the members from the opposition. As far as I can tell, 119 is not on my list, but I will say this: If 119 has been responded to, as 122 was responded to, then you're beginning to stand on points of order that aren't properly in order. I want to give you that fair notice.

**Mr Silipo:** That's a fair point that you make. I am only going by the information that I have, and it specifically was a point that was not addressed in the point of order raised earlier. Otherwise I would not have stood and made that.

**The Speaker:** The member for Beaches-Woodbine.

**Ms Lankin:** Mr Speaker, I understand the point you are trying to draw to our attention. I would say to you that I have endeavoured to ascertain whether these petitions have been answered. I certainly have endeavoured to ascertain whether or not they were on the list that Mr Gilchrist put forward. I also approached the table and asked them for the updated list which has been issued today and have been informed that it is not available at the table or for the members in the House; it is on the Internet.

So I ask you to understand that we have done our best at this point to have appropriate, updated information. The ones we are raising at this point, as we understand it, have not been referred to by the member for Scarborough East. I assure you that we are attempting to be within order. We cannot know, and would ask you to tell us if you're aware, whether or not these have been answered since the last information was posted, because that information isn't generally available yet in printed format for all members to have access to.

**The Speaker:** I appreciate what you're saying and I understand what your question was to the table clerks.

I will respond to the member for Dovercourt: Petition 119 was responded to and it in fact has been answered, as well as 121.

The member for Mississauga West.

## ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Hon Rob Sampson (Minister without Portfolio [Privatization]):** Mr Speaker, I move that we do now proceed to introduction of bills.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Mr Speaker, on a point of order —  
*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I say to the members of the opposition, I called motions, the motion was put. The member for Mississauga West was in order to stand in his place. He's moved the motion.

**Ms Lankin:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker, with respect to whether that's in order.

**The Speaker:** I need order quickly, if you can take your seat. When I call motions and I stand — and the member for Mississauga West properly stood and called the number, asked that we proceed to introduction of bills. That's in order; there's nothing out of order about that. I don't want to get caught in a Speaker's situation where a perfectly legitimate procedure is put in place and we start getting hammered on points of order. That's in order. He has moved that motion. That motion is not debatable; we will simply move to a vote. I hope you can understand that.

**Ms Lankin:** Mr Speaker —

**The Speaker:** And you're standing for?

**Ms Lankin:** For a clarification of your ruling.

**The Speaker:** I will allow the one member from the third party to have a brief moment.

**Ms Lankin:** Mr Speaker, I will not take long. I understand you say that the member has risen and attempted to move the motion to move to introduction of bills. My concern is that although we were in motions, in order to get the floor, one must be recognized. I believe

that where two members stand at the same time and one is clearly saying to you, "A point of order," and the other is standing quietly, there's a precedence in the order and it's not general rotation.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Member for Brant-Haldimand, please come to order. Thank you.

I know it's not rotation. I honestly didn't hear the member for Sudbury East say that.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I did.

**The Speaker:** She may well have said it, and I'm not suggesting to anyone that they're not honourable members. If you say you said it, you said it —

**Ms Lankin:** We'll say it louder next time.

**The Speaker:** I agree, if it means saying it louder, but I honestly did not hear her say that. If I had, I would have recognized her.

The member for Mississauga West has moved that we proceed to introduction of bills. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. It will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1707 to 1737.*

**The Speaker:** Order. The member for Mississauga West has moved that we proceed to introduction of bills.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 46; the nays are 14.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### FAIR MUNICIPAL FINANCE ACT, 1997

#### LOI DE 1997 SUR LE FINANCEMENT ÉQUITABLE DES MUNICIPALITÉS

Mr Eves moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 106, An Act respecting the financing of local government / Projet de loi 106, Loi concernant le financement des administrations locales.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. It will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1739 to 1744.*

**The Speaker:** Mr Eves has moved An Act respecting the financing of local government. All those in favour please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Gilchrist, Steve	Pettit, Trevor
Baird, John R.	Hudak, Tim	Preston, Peter
Barrett, Toby	Johns, Helen	Sampson, Rob

Boushy, Dave  
Brown, Jim  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Clement, Tony  
DeFaria, Carl  
Doyle, Ed  
Ecker, Janet  
Elliott, Brenda  
Eves, Ernie L.  
Fisher, Barbara  
Ford, Douglas B.  
Fox, Gary  
Froese, Tom

Johnson, Bert  
Johnson, David  
Johnson, Ron  
Kells, Morley  
Klees, Frank  
Leadston, Gary L.  
Marland, Margaret  
Munro, Julia  
Murdoch, Bill  
Newman, Dan  
O'Toole, John  
Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Parker, John L.

Shea, Derwyn  
Skarica, Toni  
Spina, Joseph  
Tilson, David  
Tsubouchi, David H.  
Turnbull, David  
Vankoughnet, Bill  
Villeneuve, Noble  
Wettlaufer, Wayne  
Wood, Bob  
Young, Terence H.

**The Speaker:** All those opposed please rise one at a time.

#### Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Curling, Alvin	Ruprecht, Tony
Boyd, Marion	Gerretsen, John	Sergio, Mario
Bradley, James J.	Hampton, Howard	Silipo, Tony
Christopherson, David	Kwinter, Monte	Wildman, Bud
Colle, Mike	Lankin, Frances	Wood, Len

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 46; the nays are 15.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried. Mr Eves.

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** Just very briefly, Mr Speaker, I've already enunciated in my statement earlier today the principles behind the bill. I think at the end of the day we'll find that we will have a fair and equitable property tax system for all Ontarians.

**The Speaker:** Introduction of bills. Member for Dovercourt.

## ADJOURNMENT MOTION

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** Mr Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The member for Dovercourt has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. It will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1748 to 1818.*

**The Speaker:** The member for Dovercourt has moved adjournment of the House.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 9; the nays are 39.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion lost. Now, it being past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock on Monday.

*The House adjourned at 1819.*



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of Ontario**

First Session, 36th Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 20 January 1997**

**Lundi 20 janvier 1997**



**Speaker**  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

**Président**  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

**Clerk**  
Claude L. DesRosiers

**Greffier**  
Claude L. DesRosiers



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 20 January 1997

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 20 janvier 1997

*The House met at 1331.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### ROAD SAFETY

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** Last Thursday on Highway 401 near my home a transport truck lost a part, which bounced into the path of a vehicle. The car is a write-off and the driver was taken to the hospital with three broken fingers.

In the midst of the media storm created by government inaction on truck safety, followed by several serious accidents over the Christmas break, the Premier personally promised to do whatever it takes to get unsafe trucks off the road. This is not a problem which only occurs in the GTA or the Golden Horseshoe; it happened on Thursday near Merlin, Ontario.

The government is so busy restructuring the face of Ontario, making mega-announcements, spending mega-dollars on advertising and dumping mega-responsibilities on to municipalities that it doesn't have the time to solve the road safety problems and protect innocent drivers.

This is another example of the government's rhetoric on safety: In the past five years 10 children have died in school bus accidents because of inadequate laws.

My private member's bill will protect children riding school buses. However, as with truck safety, the government is ignoring the real actions necessary for school bus safety by stalling and refusing to schedule my bill in the standing committee on resources development, which currently has no other business before it. I call on the Premier to protect Ontario school children by immediately calling Bill 78 to the standing committee on resources development.

### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** Last Friday MPPs were sent more information from the Attorney General, pretending that things are under control at the family support plan. Nothing could be further from the truth. The memo asked MPPs to encourage constituents to contact the program directly in order to discuss their case with a client service associate.

At 10:10 this morning my assistant dialled 1-800-267-4330, as instructed. The phone rang busy and the line went dead on two attempts. She then called the automated information system for payment information for a client. She dialled 1-800-267-7263, as instructed. The message said that if she wanted to speak to an operator directly, to

call the same line that went dead this morning. The message then advised clients to enter "1" for payment information, "2" for enforcement information, and then it said, "If you have any new information, for example, regarding the support payor's place of employment, please write to the regional office where your case is registered," the same regional offices that were closed by this minister in mid-August.

The memo did not include 1-800-830-4353. This is the number to call for information on compensation if you've incurred additional costs as a result of late payments. While the Attorney General had to give me the number last week in response to a question, it was not given to MPPs in the package last Friday because the minister doesn't want clients to have it, because he doesn't want to pay them.

The crisis at the family support plan continues, and the minister's incompetence in dealing with the changes continues too.

### ASSISTANCE TO FLOOD VICTIMS

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** I rise with a plea of support for a community in my riding that is in a state of emergency.

On January 8 the town of Durham was forced to evacuate many residents and businesses after ice blocked the Saugeen River and flooded the town. Two hundred and fifty residents, or 10% of the population, were displaced from their homes, many of whom will be unable to return home until spring or summer.

Thank you to my colleague the honourable Dianne Cunningham for travelling to Durham last week. Local officials were grateful to have a member of cabinet witness the situation first hand. Both the minister and I were overwhelmed by the flood damage, and despite snow and subzero temperatures, the volunteer effort has been exceptional. My personal thanks to these individuals.

Today the flooding is under control but the battle is far from over. The time and money required to rebuild will be massive, and many homeowners do not have insurance. Unlike a tornado, flooding is not a standardized insurance hazard, thus many will suffer a large financial burden. This morning I learned that estimates show personal property damage in excess of \$1 million. This far exceeds local relief abilities.

As a result the council of the town has requested aid under the Ontario disaster relief assistance program. I support this request and I am confident our government will see fit to match local effort. Also, the Ontario municipal support grant allows the minister to make a grant or loan to a municipality in circumstances beyond



its control and of an unusual nature. I believe the town of Durham warrants such consideration.

Finally, there is much work to be done. Donations to the relief fund are being accepted at many locations.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** I rise today to introduce the members of this House to one of my constituents, who is with us in the gallery today. A Thunder Bay resident, Veronica Manuel has fought for years to keep her severely disabled son Dylan at home. Through all the challenges that Dylan faces daily, he has one very special champion: his mother.

Veronica's message to all members of this House is that despite her love for her son and her desire to keep him at home, this government's cuts and cruel policies have set up the system so that she will fail.

At the request of the Liberal caucus, the social development committee will begin hearings today that will provide an opportunity for groups and individuals from across the province to bring their belief in the importance of disability services to Queen's Park.

These hearings are pretty much the only way we can bring forward the significant damage this government has caused through its cuts since taking office 18 months ago. It's becoming abundantly clear that many of their cuts, ranging from user fees for the Ontario drug benefit plan to the recent complete dumping of services like Wheel-Trans and Handi-Transit in Thunder Bay to municipalities, will have a dramatic effect on persons with disabilities.

I want to take the opportunity also to recognize some of the Thunder Bay groups that provide services to persons with disabilities but couldn't be with us today. The Lakehead Association for Community Living, the Organization for the Multi-Disabled, PACE, PUSH Northwest, the Independent Living Centre, the Handicapped Action Group and the George Jeffrey Treatment Centre all provide invaluable service to the Thunder Bay community.

#### WORKPLACE FATALITIES

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I am today calling on the Harris government to immediately call a coroner's inquest into the deaths of two workers at Dofasco's bayfront steel mill. Two employees of Auburn Industrial Services, a maintenance company contracted for the past six years by Dofasco, died last Friday while performing maintenance work on a tank used to treat molten steel. It is suspected that the two men, one from Hamilton and the other from Burlington, suffocated because of too little oxygen in the tank.

This accident raises grave safety concerns, and the Harris government must immediately call an inquest to get to the bottom of the matter before any more workers are killed. How do other workers and their families know it won't be them next time?

The United Steelworkers of America, Local 4153, which represented the two workers, is also calling for a coroner's inquest. This accident needs a thorough investi-

gation that includes the full participation of the United Steelworkers of America.

I conclude by offering the condolences of my colleagues in the New Democratic caucus to the families and friends of those workers who were injured in the line of their work.

1340

#### MARTIN LUTHER KING JR

**Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West):** Today the world pauses to remember and celebrate the life of Martin Luther King Jr, and reflect on the ideals for which he struggled and for which he died.

As minister of the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Dr King was catapulted into international prominence as the leader of the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955. He founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference to spearhead non-violent mass demonstrations against racism. Dr King's campaigns were instrumental in the passage of the US Civil Rights Acts of 1964, 1965 and 1968.

As a result of his activism, Dr King lived in constant danger. His home was dynamited, he was almost fatally stabbed and he was jailed 30 times. Despite all this, Dr Martin Luther King Jr remained true to his code of non-violence.

After delivering his greatest prophetic sermon at Washington Cathedral on March 31, 1968, Dr King was brutally murdered by an assassin's bullet four days later. A non-violent activist, he died a violent death.

Today Martin Luther King Jr is acclaimed by the world as a martyr, a prophet and patron saint of the human rights movement. Like the biblical Elijah, he went to the mountaintop where, like Moses, he had seen the promised land, and he knew that one day he and all people would be free at last.

I am extremely proud to have personally marched in support of Dr King.

I invite all members of the House to join me in the Martinsday celebrations, organized by the Toronto Martinsday committee, taking place throughout Toronto. May the person and the ideals of Martin Luther King Jr —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** Last week the government managed to fire off many, many announcements — mega-announcements. The reality is that last week's announcements were about dumping costs on to Ontario's cities and towns. City leaders and town leaders have yet to realize the dramatic impact that the dumping of these costs is going to have, but so far they're putting on a brave face. Hardly could we expect that city and county leaders would at this point dare to stand up against a Harris government, seeing as anyone who does that to this heavy-handed group faces regular penalties that it's prepared to dole out to anyone opposed to its agenda.

The real facts are these: The Harris government is dumping huge costs on to cities, towns and counties



across Ontario, dumping costs of seniors' homes, roads, buses, welfare, child care, and the list goes on. Whom are they dumping them on? Residential taxpayers. Let's make no mistake about what last week's announcements were about: dumping on to residential taxpayers.

City leaders will be hard-pressed not to raise taxes. Their choices become one of two: They either raise taxes or they cut service. This brings us back to the depression-plagued 1930s. The province had to take back these services. Why? Because Ontario towns couldn't afford them. They were going bankrupt.

Last week's announcement —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

**Interjection:** Is that okay?

**The Speaker:** No, that's not actually.

**Interjection.**

**The Speaker:** It may be an announcement, but you can't accuse the government of —

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** You cut her off, so it's not in Hansard.

**The Speaker:** Yes, I cut her off; it's not in Hansard. It doesn't matter; I heard the member for Windsor-Sandwich. I don't know if you know, member for Windsor-Sandwich: You can't accuse the government of perpetrating the big lie.

**Interjection:** She said the announcements were.

**The Speaker:** Announcement or not, it's still an accusation. It's out of order.

Statements.

## SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** Last week, I received a petition signed by more than 200 students of the Marathon High School in the riding of Lake Nipigon. Truly, this petition is a sad reflection of the current state of education in the province of Ontario. The students state emphatically that the government's cuts are having a negative impact on everyone at the school. They describe outdated textbooks, defective science equipment, inadequate supplies and a poorly heated high school. Last week, the thermometer plunged to a wind chill factor of minus 60. They voice their frustration at this government's indifference to the large student-teacher ratio and the overcrowding of students in small, stuffy classrooms. They do not depict conditions conducive to good learning order.

The culmination of this pent-up frustration will no doubt lead to the inferior education of students, and yet they will be expected to compete and lead this province into the future. These students are eager to face these challenges. They must have a solid education if they are to be well equipped to defend and cope with society in the future. I join the students from the Marathon High School and demand that this government stop the cuts immediately.

## EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton):** Many constituents are contacting me every day to congratulate this government for its commitment to remove \$5.4 billion from the

property tax bill and bring in greater accountability and move local services to local governments.

One of the criticisms levelled at this government by the hysterical opposition is that our education reforms will make the public school less democratically accountable. Rory Leishman, of the London Free Press, has this to say about that:

"That's nonsense. Ontario's publicly funded school boards and their bureaucracies could hardly be less accountable than they are already.... It has long been evident that Ontario's publicly funded schools have become intolerably expensive, inefficient and unaccountable to the public. Last year, the Harris government slashed both spending and taxes, only to have 70% of school boards increase their residential taxes once again." He calls what my colleague the Minister of Education and Training is doing "sound reform."

In addition to being out of touch with fiscal reality, as they have been for the past 10 years, the opposition parties are out of touch with what taxpayers and parents want for their children when it comes to education. They should stop blindly defending vested interests and start acting responsibly on behalf of the taxpayers of Ontario.

## VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I'm sure the members will want to know that in the opposition members' gallery today is, from the previous Legislature, the member for Wentworth North, Mr Don Abel. Welcome very much.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The dust has settled somewhat since mega-week, Minister, and I think it's become clear to all of us that what you did last week was that you lit the fuse on a bomb that's going to cause a property tax explosion right across this province. At the end of the day, last week's announcements meant one thing and one thing alone: Residential property taxpayers are going to be left holding the bag when you saddle them with your decision to dump \$1 billion in new costs on their shoulders.

After a week of announcements that were deliberately designed to confuse, but didn't have their effect, will you today come clean and admit that your dumping is going to lead to property tax increases right across Ontario?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** To the Leader of the Opposition, it is quite the contrary. The announcements we made last week are going to lead to better government. They're going to lead to more consistent decisions. Taking \$5.4 billion off the property tax is going to give significant room for municipalities to implement the programs they've been asked to look after. I am sure they can do that, and I'm quite confident that if they do it with the expertise they have within their municipalities, they will be able to reduce taxes.



**Mr McGuinty:** That's not what people are saying out there, Minister. That's not what people are saying out there. You're not hearing them.

We've done the numbers, we've done the calculations, and they clearly show we're looking at an additional \$1 billion in costs that property taxpayers across the province are going to have to pick up. That's even after working in your bail-out fund. You're still over \$1 billion short. That's \$1 billion in new property taxes.

Take the people of Hamilton. They're going to be \$61 million short — that's \$61 million in new property taxes. My community, Ottawa, will be \$80 million short — that's 184 bucks a year in new property tax increases for the average homeowner in the Ottawa area.

Minister, how can you justify dumping over \$1 billion in new costs on the backs of hardworking, decent, law-abiding property taxpayers right across the province?

**Hon Mr Leach:** The Leader of the Opposition says they've developed the numbers. Well, right away I have some suspicion as to the credibility of those numbers. We said last week that we were going to take about \$6.4 billion off the property tax and that we would expect the municipalities to be able to absorb a like, equal amount. 1350

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** Could you speak up, please?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I'd love to speak out if I could, Sandra, believe me.

We looked at this to be a wash if the municipalities could be able to absorb — and we're quite confident they can — through efficiencies any differences that may occur from one municipality to another. There's no doubt that some municipalities are going to be ahead of the game and some municipalities are going to be slightly behind the game, but we're sure that with the fund we've set up to help them, it will all work out as a wash in the end.

**Mr McGuinty:** I want to say again to the minister, this is not the case of a wash. If the minister has not done the calculations, we have. We're talking about one billion new dollars in additional costs that are going to have to be borne by property taxpayers. The figures are right there in black and white.

My colleague from Ottawa-Vanier was able to speak with four mayors in the Ottawa-Carleton area and they told him quite clearly that, if anything, property taxes were going to go up, not down. It's not just the people in larger cities either who are going to see their property taxes rise: The people in the riding of Prescott-Russell are also going to see the effects of your property tax explosion. You've short-changed them in Prescott-Russell by \$23 million.

Minister, stop pretending this is a fair shake. This is not an even swap, it's not a wash. Call it what it is, please: Call it the largest dumping of services on the property taxes this province has ever seen.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I don't know where they came up with their \$1-billion number. It must be from the same people who calculated their days-of-protest crowd.

We have said and we continue to repeat that there are some municipalities whose funding is going to be less than they would like and there are some municipalities

that are going to be ahead of the game. That is why we set aside \$1 billion of our restructuring fund to assist those municipalities that may require help in this process. It's just for that purpose. We know there are some municipalities, whether they're the municipalities that the member opposite has mentioned or not, I do not know at this point in time, but if there are municipalities that require help, that help will be there.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** New question, the leader of the official opposition.

**Mr McGuinty:** My next question is to the same minister. With respect to that new \$1 billion, let's be straight about that: That's a fraud. What we're really talking about here is the same old municipal support grant. It's the same darn thing. You've just given it a new name. There's no new money there.

The second question: If you want to talk about studies, let's home in on some studies here. You've got at least three impact studies on the neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood effects of your property tax changes. Last week we asked the Minister of Finance to release those studies so residential property taxpayers could figure out exactly what the implications of AVA were going to mean to them. He refused.

Minister, why are you keeping those studies, which we know you have, private? Why are you keeping them secret? What do those studies show that makes you so afraid to release them to us?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I personally don't have any house-by-house impact studies. I think everybody knows, including the opposition, that the numbers for the new assessment system, AVA, were developed by taking the 1992 market value assessment numbers which were published widely across Metropolitan Toronto — as a matter of fact, it was the reason that Metropolitan Toronto's assessment process went down the tubes by at least \$100 million a year. What we did is we took those numbers, factored them up to 1995 and said, "This would be the approximate impact on our neighbourhood study."

The city of Toronto has those numbers, the city of Scarborough has those numbers, the city of North York has those numbers; everybody has those numbers. The only people who probably don't have them are the members of the opposition, and I'm sure that if they looked in their files, they would probably find them.

**Mr McGuinty:** This is incredible. What we're talking about here is the most significant change in property tax assessment in the history of this province and there have been no impact studies done.

Let's move on to another area where I hope you did some studies. I assume you wouldn't be turning over new responsibilities to our municipalities without first knowing the community-by-community impacts that are going to be felt. Surely you've got to have some idea of the costs that will be incurred by each municipality as a result of your dumping on them. So I'm going to ask you to release that information, as distinct from any AVA studies. Tell us exactly what those studies show. Tell us — show us — how your dumping can lead to anything but a property tax explosion right across Ontario.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I find it strange that the Leader of the Opposition could stand up just two minutes ago and say



that they've done all the numbers — he was quoting municipality-by-municipality numbers — and then say he doesn't have any information. Where did he get this number? Obviously the information is available to the opposition, or this individual wouldn't be able to produce numbers such as that. Of course, it may be that they're just making them up; I don't know. From the sounds of it, they could well be.

We have said on a number of occasions that some municipalities are going to be slightly ahead as a result of the transfer of responsibilities and some are going to be behind. That's why we're setting up that \$1-billion fund.

**Mr McGuinty:** The only reliable information that's been put forward in this House is our figures. We're not afraid to show these. They're right here in black and white and they clearly show that property taxpayers in Ontario are looking at an additional \$1 billion in taxes. Those are the only numbers that are on the table. If you disagree with ours, then put up yours. It's as simple as that.

Since you refuse to release your information, we can only consume our facts, and our facts say you short-change Ontario taxpayers by \$1 billion. Again, for the record, Hamilton-Wentworth, \$60 million in new taxes; Ottawa-Carleton, \$80 million; Prescott and Russell, \$23 million; Metro Toronto, over \$378 million short.

Minister, let me see if I've got this straight. Either you have no idea what the costs of your dumping are going to be, or you know exactly what those are and you are refusing to release them. Which is it?

**Hon Mr Leach:** Again, we're going around this question. We know that we're putting about \$6.4 billion on the municipalities. We know that we are taking roughly the same amount off and that —

**The Speaker:** Order. I can't hear the minister's response. It's just a general din, I think, about the hall here. If I could get some order from all the members, I'd appreciate it. Thank you. Go ahead.

**Hon Mr Leach:** Just to state it again, we know that by taking \$5.4 billion off the property taxes, municipalities are going to have that large window of opportunity to deal with the programs we've asked them to be responsible for; that, along with the \$1 billion in additional funding that's going to be made available to those municipalities that need it. I'm sure that all of them will be quite well off when we're finished.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is also for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Let's cut right through the baloney. There is no additional \$1 billion. You used to have a municipal support grant. You've wiped that out. It came to close to \$1 billion. You're now calling it this transition fund. So there's no extra money here. You take away money with the left hand that you say you're giving with the right hand. But when you cut through it, I think the mayors of all the cities in Toronto and Metro Chair Tonks are right, that in terms of Metropolitan Toronto you're going to push down an additional \$388 million on to property taxpayers. That's how much you're offloading.

Why don't you just come out and admit it now, Minister? Why don't you admit that Metro taxpayers

from across Metro Toronto are going to have to pay for your tax scheme for the wealthy? Why don't you just admit it, be honest about it? Everybody knows it.

**Hon Mr Leach:** To deal specifically with Metropolitan Toronto, we're taking about \$1.3 billion off the property tax by removing education from it. We're asking them to assume a like amount.

The \$384 million that has been quoted in the newspaper has some questions about it. I'm not conceding that number is correct, but let's assume for the sake of argument that it is correct. The new city of Toronto is going to have a budget of roughly \$7 billion. If anybody can't cut or reduce expenditures by 4%, 5% or 6% out of \$7 billion, they shouldn't bother running for election.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Hold on. The member for Oriole. Thank you.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I hope they'll recall I didn't concede the number was correct, but I'm saying that if it was in that neighbourhood, every government ministry has dealt with cuts of 10%, 20% and 30% from their operating budgets. Any municipality that can't absorb a 4% reduction in spending — they shouldn't run again.

1400

**Mr Hampton:** I think the minister just let the cat out of the bag inadvertently. What this is all about is putting health care costs down on municipalities, putting social assistance costs down on municipalities and then saying to municipalities: "You cut. You do the dirty work so the Conservative government can give its wealthy friends a big tax break." That's exactly what it's all about and you just let the cat out of the bag.

The Metro chairman is very forthcoming with his figures. He shows exactly where they're coming from. He shows exactly where this is going to mount up. He shows that over time the health care costs are going to go through the roof. If you doubt their figures, let's see your figures. If you're the government of Ontario and you're so sure all this is going to work, then let's see your figures that give some proof this is going to work without having to cut health care, without having to cut all those other services that have made Toronto a good community to live in. Let's see your numbers.

**Hon Mr Leach:** To deal with the numbers for Metropolitan Toronto, I saw the list of numbers, the same numbers the leader of the third party got from his research people at the Globe and Mail. The number of \$389 million I believe was shown as the cost of social housing. It is shown as a number that is going to be resolutely taken care of at one single point in time. We were very clear to indicate that the cost of social housing, for example, would be phased in over two or three years. A number of the figures quoted there are 1996 numbers, I assume. We have to remember that the cost of education was increasing and continues to increase at about 5% a year. Based just on that number, there will be a \$60-million reduction to the municipalities next year and another \$60-plus million the year after that; in the next two or three years the savings from education alone will solve that difference.

**Mr Hampton:** This minister wants to say, "This is what's going to be saved from education." Let's look at



what you've pushed down. You've handed Metro Toronto and every other municipality in this province a ticking time bomb in terms of health care costs. In the case of Metro Toronto, there are 50% more seniors per capita in Metro Toronto than elsewhere in the province. In other words, the long-term health care costs are going to go up even faster than education would have gone up.

Let's look at the number of people who need social assistance. They're higher per capita. In other words, that number is going to go up.

Let's look at the social housing numbers. In fact, there's a greater percentage here in Metro Toronto than elsewhere. Those numbers are going to go up.

Look, Minister, everybody else can add. Everybody else looks at the figures, looks at the projections, and knows that what you're doing is pushing down health care, social assistance and housing, and you're going to force municipalities to cut all those things. Why don't you come clean and admit it? Everybody else can see it.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I don't know where the leader of the third party has been over the last several years, but since this party came into power, welfare costs are declining. They've gone down. That's that one.

Our calculations are that the costs of social services will continue to decline over the next several years. The cost of education would have continued to climb. Social services are continuing to go down. The municipalities are going to end up with about the same amount of financial responsibility as they have now.

**The Speaker:** New question.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** Back to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The municipal affairs minister will know that every government in the western world is worried about the costs of long-term health care. In fact, the Davis government back in 1983-84 started looking at long-term care. What you've tried to do is to push that down on to municipalities. You've tried to push all of those future costs on to municipalities, knowing they'll have to cut health care.

I want you to give people a guarantee today. I want you to give people in Metro Toronto and elsewhere a guarantee that municipalities will not have to cut health care because you forced these very expensive costs on to them.

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I'm going to refer that question to the Minister of Health.

*Interjections.*

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** Not too popular again, Mr Speaker.

Far from reducing long-term care and far from having a poorer service, the objective in terms of working with municipalities, in terms of having a partnership with municipalities on a 50-50 basis, is that this will allow for the integration of long-term care, that this will result in a greater coordination of long-term care. It is my prediction that we will see a better quality of service and that we will see services tailored to municipalities.

**Mr Hampton:** Even the chair of the government's health care restructuring committee doesn't agree with that. The chair of the health care restructuring committee has clearly said this is not going to work; it's not going to provide for integration.

I want to go back to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Minister, you've appointed three trustees. This is how government at the Metropolitan Toronto level gets run by you now: You appoint trustees. In order that we can get some real answers and some real figures, we think these trustees should be answering questions from the press, but you've put a gag order on them. You've told these trustees they are not to talk to the press. It's called accountability, Minister. We can't get any answers from you, so why don't you allow these appointed trustees to at least answer some questions of the press so there can at least be some accountability, some answers to the chaos you're trying to create?

**Hon David Johnson:** This is a question clearly posed to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, and I will ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs to deal with it.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I read that story in the Toronto Star as well about a gag order being put on the trustees. I have no idea where it came from. It's blatantly untrue. The trustees are free to speak to anyone at any time, anywhere. The only issue that has been of some concern is that the city of Scarborough has launched a legal action against the validity of the trustees, and all members of my ministry and government and the trustees were advised to approach that question with caution. But any other question on any other subject that they're dealing with, they are at liberty to speak to whomever they think it appropriate to speak to.

1410

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Supplementary.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** That's at least of some help, and we will see how that plays out in terms of, at least while Bill 103 is being debated, the trustees' not being shut out from the public and not being shut out from the media.

There are other aspects of the bill that we have been raising in this House with you as well, particularly around the timing of this bill. I want to again ask you today, will you ensure that the democratic process will be allowed to unfold in such a way that you will not ram through the bill before the referendum takes place in Metropolitan Toronto? Will you ensure that there is ample time for this bill to be debated in committee and that the debate is set up in such a way that you will not try to ram the bill through before the referendum takes place?

**Hon Mr Leach:** The member opposite has indicated that he wants the public to be heard on this issue. So do we want the public to be heard, and that's why we're asking the opposition parties to assist us in getting this bill through the House as quickly as we can, so that it can go to committee hearings where people will have the opportunity to make deputations, provide input, give whatever criticisms they feel are appropriate. That's the kind of democratic action we would like to see. We want to see this bill get to committee so that the people of this area can have a chance to have their input.



## PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and it has to do with the impact that the moves will have on what historically has been the finest urban area in North America. I would say to you, I don't believe your numbers. You are telling what I regard as — if I can use this, Mr Speaker — the big lie in the report.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I appreciate the fact you consulted me, and no, you can't use that. I ask you to withdraw it.

**Mr Phillips:** I think the public should be very aware. The government has said that it has a \$1-billion fund, but what you've neglected to tell people is that you have cut out completely \$666 million of another fund, so what we're talking about is \$335 million, not \$1 billion, and that will have a devastating impact on community after community. The question has to do with Metropolitan Toronto because I think you are going to destroy Metro Toronto.

Firstly, you have added hundreds of millions of dollars of extra cost. Your fund will not come close to covering the cost. You have eliminated something called the business occupancy tax, which is over 15% of the revenue. You could not have made a decision of this magnitude without having the numbers before you. My question is very clearly this: Will you agree today to release the impact on Metropolitan Toronto?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** Again, the numbers that the opposition has put forward indicate something in the neighbourhood of \$300 million. When the new city of Toronto is set up, it will have a budget of roughly \$7 billion. We're asking the municipalities to work with us. We have an opportunity when we set up that new city to set best-practice standards that we're convinced will save substantial amounts of money, certainly far more than 4% or 5% of their operating budget.

**Mr Phillips:** What I just heard you say is that you expect that property taxes in Metropolitan Toronto could go up by as much as 10%. If you are suggesting that the increased cost you have loaded on to the municipality is \$280 million or \$290 million, that for the residential taxpayer is an increase of over 10%.

It is extremely important for the property taxpayers of Metropolitan Toronto to see your numbers. Will you agree today to release the study that indicates that you have support for a conclusion you have already reached that there are substantial savings and we won't see a 10% increase in property tax in Metropolitan Toronto? Will you release those numbers today?

**Hon Mr Leach:** We released that report some time ago. It was the KPMG report that indicated that with the establishment of a single city there would be a saving of roughly \$865 million —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon Mr Leach:** They indicated they would save \$865 million over three years and \$300 million every year thereafter. That's net of the implementation costs. That report is out for the opposition to use.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** My question is to the same minister, that of municipal affairs. Minister, last week, yourself and other colleagues in your government were boldly saying to the people of Ontario that they can expect a tax decrease in the order of some 10%. Al Tonks says that with an inventory of 100,000 social housing units, it would be an impossible situation. Mel Lastman, who stood to benefit, said, "If we are forced to pay 50% of welfare as well as child care, we will go broke." Terry Mundell, chair of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, says, "We can no longer protect property taxpayers."

Minister, are you saying that three years down the line property taxpayers of the province of Ontario can expect to pay 10% less than what they're paying today?

**Hon Mr Leach:** To repeat, with the municipalities being relieved of \$5.4 billion off the property tax, an amount that's growing by 5% a year, by assuming costs of programs that in some cases are reducing, as the Minister of Finance said last week and I concur with him, if the municipalities are prudent in their application of being relieved of that heavy burden on the property tax, it's quite within the realm of possibility that they could reduce taxes by as much as 10%, yes.

**Mr Pouliot:** Minister, please stop dancing. This is bad opium you sell through your numbers. First you say that taxes will not go up because of efficiencies at the municipal level, and then you say taxes will go down by 10% because of the same efficiencies. That's double counting. You can't have it eight different ways. Minister, come clean. You don't know what you're talking about. We have our own calculation that proves that what you're saying and what you're hoping for while you keep your toes and your fingers crossed is that if you take today's trend and compound it for three to four years, taxes would have been so much, and then what you do is you conveniently duck 10% of what it would have been. This is very thinly veiled. This is a charade that does not even convince children. People don't believe their taxes will go down. They believe you're dumping on them with more responsibilities and more taxes. Come clean and tell the truth, Minister.

**Hon Mr Leach:** The member opposite said that we said there wouldn't be any tax increases. That's absolutely correct. And then we said there's a possibility that if the municipalities apply good processes and work efficiently with the programs they've been asked to be responsible for, they should be able to reduce taxes. I don't see anything inconsistent with those two statements whatsoever.

1420

## AIR QUALITY

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North):** My question is for the Minister of Environment and Energy. Minister, in a recent article in the Toronto Star, it reported reductions of air monitoring stations in Brampton, Markham and Mississauga. I would like the minister to please comment on the validity of what was reported and clarify the ministry's position regarding Ontario's air quality.



**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** Thank you very much, because I consider this a serious matter because of not only the factual incorrectness of the article but also the inference that it made.

The article incorrectly claims that air pollution monitoring no longer exists in Markham and Brampton. Number one, there has never been permanent air pollution index quality monitoring in Markham. Number two, there is a site in Stouffville which not only is operating but also recently has been upgraded to state-of-the-art monitoring for ozone. In Brampton, there are four monitoring sites which remain at the Brampton Brick site. While the article claims that there is only one station in Mississauga, there are in fact seven stations in Mississauga. As well, there is also an extensive air study being conducted by Petro-Canada in Clarkson, thanks in great part to the member for Mississauga South. As the Minister of Environment, I want to ensure that air quality is at the top of our priority list.

**Mr Spina:** In addition to the permanent air monitoring sites, what other initiatives is the ministry undertaking to protect air quality across the province?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I think it's important to note that in addition to the permanent air quality monitoring stations, we have as well mobile emergency response capability; we have air monitoring mobile units as well to go across the province to measure the air quality in different areas.

We are also focusing for the first time in 20 years, because of the lack of previous governments' concern over air quality, on the setting of standards, as pointed out by the Provincial Auditor of this province. We have also indicated that we are examining very seriously a vehicle inspection maintenance program to deal with vehicle emissions. We are moving more aggressively with regard to air quality in this province than any previous government has ever done.

#### GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** My question is for the Chairman of Management Board. I was just reviewing the Hansards of some of the questions that your friends Ernie Eves and Mike Harris, when they were in opposition, asked about "blatant" government advertising. You were labelling the NDP advertising as that.

Today, when you are spending over \$2 million of hard-earned taxpayers' dollars on self-serving government propaganda at a time when you are cutting essential services and closing hospitals in this province, how can you possibly justify the expenditure of well over \$2 million on self-serving, partisan government propaganda?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** I would assume that when the Premier and the Minister of Finance were concerned about blatant advertising, they may have been thinking of some \$22.3 million spent in 1990-91 by the government of the day, of which the member opposite was a representative. I know the member opposite is concerned that the government in 1990-91 spent \$22.3 million on advertising through the ministries, and I will assure the member

opposite that this government will spend considerably less money than that \$22.3 million.

**Mr Bradley:** Every time the taxpayers of this province turn on their television sets and see one of your self-serving government ads or open a newspaper or listen to the radio and hear or see this government propaganda, they should know that their hard-earned tax dollars are going to this despite the fact that you characterize yourself as a penny-pinching government that watches tax dollars.

The people of Ontario are also interested in fairness. At a time when an important debate is taking place, you are abusing your government position to spend all of this money to put forward a case which is clear government propaganda.

Minister, will you do the right thing? Will you today order the withdrawal of all these blatant propaganda ads and return to the people of this province some \$2.350 million of their dollars that you are spending to further your own case?

**Hon David Johnson:** Notwithstanding the fact that previous governments, both NDP and Liberal, have spent considerably more on advertising than this government will spend, it is a good question. This government is leading by example and this government believes that the members of the government —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Government members, order. Minister?

**Hon David Johnson:** The people of Ontario have every right to know that this government is leading by example. We have reduced the number of MPPs from 130 to 103. We have reduced the compensation of the members of this Legislature. We have, as the first government, I think, ever in the history of government, actually spent our own party money, some \$800,000, on advertising. We did not put that to the taxpayers of Ontario to pay and we are reducing the costs of government so that all the people in the economy will benefit.

#### TERMINATION AND SEVERANCE PAYMENTS

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** My question is to the Minister of Labour. You will know that in 1989 Rizzo Shoes in Brantford went bankrupt, putting over 800 workers out of work. The previous government fought on behalf of those workers, these non-union workers, for six years through the courts to get them the termination pay they're entitled to.

In the summer of 1995, just a couple of months after you took power, you very quietly abandoned this claim and abandoned these workers. One of them is here today, Mr Creador, and he's listening very carefully to your answers. When you abandoned that claim, the Canadian Labour Congress stepped in because of the importance and provided the funding to hire lawyers to continue that case in front of the Supreme Court. Last month, in what must be a major embarrassment for you and your ministry, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled they would allow the appeal and waive the time lines.

Minister, my question to you is this: Will you today admit your mistake, apologize to Mr Creador and the



other workers there and announce that you'll rejoin this case and fight for those workers like you should have been doing in the first place?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour):** As the member knows, we are taking many actions on behalf of workers in this province, and I would simply indicate to you that since this issue is currently before the courts, I am obviously not in a position to make any further comments about the specifics of this case.

**Mr Christopherson:** What a joke of an answer, because this is about your abandoning these workers. It's not about the case. What we want to know today and what the workers have a right to know is, why did you abandon them? Why did you leave them high and dry? In fact, you didn't even tell them; you didn't notify them that you were dropping it. You notified no one. Why didn't you do that? Apologize to those workers. Don't hide behind some flim-flam argument about the merits of the case. Announce today that in light of the Supreme Court of Canada decision, you will stand up and fight for those workers like you ought to have been doing from the beginning. Announce that today, Minister.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I simply indicate to you once again that we are doing and taking many reforms on behalf of workers in this province and already we've seen some new job opportunities for workers.

I think I need to remind you of the fact that there was a change made under Bill 7. Bill 7 clarified and strengthened the right of employees under the Employment Standards Act to claim termination and severance pay in situations where their employers had become insolvent.

1430

### SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** My question is for the Attorney General. I understand that at the end of last year the new director of the special investigations unit, André Marin, concluded a very serious investigation into a motor vehicle accident in my part of the province. This investigation was completed in just 30 days. Could the minister inform the House what time lines the taxpayers of Ontario can expect in the very large number of cases before the special investigations unit? After years of long delays in similar investigations, the public in my part of the province welcomes the speedy result of this investigation. Could the minister inform the House of the timetable for other investigations?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I thank the member for Nepean for the question. Since the government appointed André Marin as the permanent director of the SIU at the end of September, the unit has made significant strides in its performance. I have received 86 reports in just over the last 70 working days.

As you're aware, the unit is responsible for handling very sensitive investigations. The new director has been attacking the caseload on two fronts: first, by reducing the number of outstanding cases, and second, by instituting new internal policies that streamline the investigative procedures and processes, allowing for a high quality of investigation to be completed within 30 days.

**Mr Baird:** Given that in the past some special investigations unit investigations have taken up to two years to complete, could the Attorney General update the House on the current status of the total SIU caseload?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** When I first became the Attorney General, decisions within the SIU could often take up to two years. I'm pleased to report that the SIU no longer has a backlog situation with respect to the current caseload. As of January 13, 1997, the total number of active cases in the unit was 17. I'm pleased by the progress Mr Marin has made in completing cases. Providing decisions quickly will help restore the confidence of communities across Ontario in the SIU.

### PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. We've been hearing for the last week or so the rhetoric coming out of your government regarding the impact of this massive mega-dumping that you're putting on to municipalities across Ontario. Reality is going to set in. Municipalities are starting to see very clearly the impact your dumping is having on them.

In Hamilton-Wentworth, the latest figures we have are that your additional costs to the taxpayers of my region — and the numbers will actually go up — are now \$69 million. That equals an almost 25% tax increase, 25% more in municipal taxes. You sit there and smirk. I'll show you the numbers in a second, because it is reality because of what you have done.

You have talked about the fund. You have talked about the \$1 billion. Very simply, can you guarantee today to the residents of Hamilton-Wentworth that you will cover every single cent in additional costs as a result of your municipal dumping on the region?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I don't know whether the numbers the member has quoted take into consideration the vast amount we're taking off the education tax. I assume they do. I don't think any municipality where we're asking them to deliver certain hard services such as transit or parks is anywhere near a 45% increase in property taxes. As we've said earlier, we're quite confident that if the municipalities, with the window that's open to them with the reduction of \$5.4 billion off the education tax, implement the services we're now asking them to provide, they will in fact be able to reduce taxes.

**Mr Agostino:** You've not opened the window, Minister. You've blown the roof off the house; you're going to blow the roof off municipalities across this province. You've talked about a fair shake. Well, this is a shake-down. You're shaking down municipal taxpayers to benefit your tax cut.

Minister, I have an invoice for you of \$69 million that you owe to the people of Hamilton-Wentworth —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Member for Hamilton East, you're out of order. Would you like to continue?

**Mr Agostino:** Minister, it's very simple: Your government, which is a master of deception, has deceived the people of Ontario. You will not deceive the people of —



**The Speaker:** Order. Minister.

**Hon Mr Leach:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. With all the rhetoric that was going on over there —

**Mr Agostino:** — \$69 million.

**The Speaker:** The member for Hamilton East, I'm warning you to come to order.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** I am not arguing with you. Come to order.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** Sixty-nine million.

**The Speaker:** Member for Lake Nipigon, you're not helping. I appreciate the thought, though. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Hon Mr Leach:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. He rambled on there at such length I don't think he ever did get around to a question. We can only repeat that the municipalities are going to be in a far better position to deal with property taxes after the changes we make than they were before.

I think everybody recognizes that the one growing cost every municipality was faced with was the increasing cost of education. With that program off their backs, being able to deal with the programs that we've asked them to look at, we're quite confident that the municipalities will not have to increase taxes.

There may be some municipalities where these programs have more of an effect than others, and that's why we've set up the \$1-billion fund: to look after them. We'll ensure and we're quite confident that no municipality in this province will be unduly affected by the changes we've introduced.

#### BAIL SUPERVISION PROGRAM

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** My question is for the Solicitor General. Last week you cancelled the bail programs throughout this province, supposedly on the grounds of financial constraints. It's important that you understand that all sectors of the justice system — police, judges, crowns, defence bar, justices of the peace, all parts of the justice system — are criticizing this decision and disagree with the cancellation of this program.

Dr Gail Kellough, who is associate professor at York University, is conducting research into the bail program funded by the Ontario government, and she wrote you a letter dated September 20, 1995, in which she stated:

"While such costs may appear significant in the short run, they are substantially less so than either costs incurred by unnecessary pre-trial detention, the costs of correctional beds, of supervised transportation to and from courts, for correctional intake processing, the cost of hiring duty counsel, the cost of income to the local tax base," and she goes on.

Minister, you obviously decided to ignore her research —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you, member for London Centre. Minister?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** This is not an easy decision to come to with respect to this program. We don't disagree with the principles of bail supervision, but part of the process that we undertook upon assuming

office was to review all of the core services provided by individual ministries.

The program that has been conducted through the Ministry of Correctional Services for a number of years is not a mandated program. In fact, when we took a look at all of the implications with respect to this program, we relied to some degree on a study conducted by the previous government, the NDP government, in 1992. One of the major thrusts of this program when it was instituted in 1980 was theoretically to relieve pressure on the corrections system in Ontario. In fact, the 1992 study indicated quite clearly that it was having no measurable or meaningful impact on the remand population in our institutions.

**Mrs Boyd:** Minister, that's just a ridiculous comment for you to be making. Neil Webster, the director of the Toronto bail program, who's in the members' gallery today, says that it costs the Toronto bail program \$4.05 a day to supervise a person out on bail as opposed to approximately \$120 a day for someone in jail.

The Toronto bail program has conducted a survey of judges and justices of the peace and the majority of those said they wouldn't release people without the bail program. Therefore, what you're doing is adding to the total overall costs and you are endangering the public safety, because these people will not be supervised when they are out on bail and that is a very serious matter.

We know of very serious crimes that may be committed by people who are not in jail, and that's exactly why the judges and justices of the peace will say they won't take a chance. They will keep people in jail, and it will cost many, many times more to keep the 1,500 people who are currently on bail province-wide in the jails.

Why are you doing this? It makes no sense: no economic sense and no social sense.

**Hon Mr Runciman:** The cost argument is really not a comparison of apples and apples. With respect to the cost savings and our costs of incarceration, we really are not going to achieve the kinds of savings that this member and others perhaps are suggesting unless we, for example, close down an entire unit of a corrections institution. By taking someone out of a bed, we do not achieve the kinds of savings the member is suggesting.

The fact is as well that approximately 37% of the participants are already supervised in the community justice system, a significant duplication. I get back to the crux of this matter, that we're talking about people who have not yet been through the justice system, have not been found guilty of an offence and should not in any way, shape or form be the responsibility of the corrections ministry.

1440

#### HIGHWAY FINANCING

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Further to our discussions a week ago, when we discussed that your ministry was transferring provincial highways back to the municipalities, the minister announced that his responsibility for 72.1 kilometres of King's Highway was transferred to the



united counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry. Local engineers estimated the cost to bring the highway up to today's standard at \$15 million. After negotiations with the councils and your ministry, the terms with your ministry were negotiated by your Ottawa staff at \$8.471 million in five payments. However, after the agreement was submitted to the Kingston staff, the offer stood at \$5.061 million. How could this offer have been changed?

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I don't know the exact particulars of the highway deal that was initially made or the renegotiation, but I really want to say that this government is going to treat every municipality the same, and it's going to be fair and consistent.

**Mr Cleary:** I don't think you have quite answered my question. This is a long section of highway that runs through three municipalities. As part of your election platform, the government correctly stated that there was only one taxpayer. I ask you to play fair with those local taxpayers in our municipalities. Will you at least go back to the agreement negotiated with your Ottawa staff? How could this change have happened like that?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** Like I said earlier, I believe this government will be fair and consistent and treat every municipality the same. There are clearly highways that no longer serve a purpose as provincial highways, so therefore we must turn these things over to the municipalities. If there is a disagreement as to the funds that the government is allowing the municipality, as the member is saying, in refurbishing the roads, according to the local engineer who has put that project together, we'll take a look at it. Again, I want to say to the member this government will be fair and very consistent and treat every municipality, when it comes to highway transfers, exactly the same.

## FOREST INDUSTRY

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** I have a question for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines and the Minister of Natural Resources. In April, in response to a question I asked regarding the 15% export tax on Ontario softwood lumber, your colleague Mr Saunderson said, "Jobs, we feel, will be gained because of the excellent climate we are creating in this province to create jobs and encourage business."

Minister, let me tell you what the reality is. Small sawmills in Ignace, Red Lake and across northern Ontario will be forced to close, and large mills will have to cut production this year due to the tax blows delivered by the federal and provincial governments last fall.

The mills' quotas have been reduced by 15% to 20%. Quotas for new entrants have been cut even deeper. "The Spruce Falls mill received such a minuscule amount, it's not even worth mentioning," says the president of Tembec, "and if the quota is not adjusted properly, there will be major repercussions. Ontario got a raw deal compared to other provinces. The Ontario market is going to be flooded and prices are going to collapse."

Minister, why did you not stand up for Ontario at the cabinet and during the negotiations on the agreement?

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines):** It's not very often that I agree with the opposition, in that this was a tax that the federal agreement has the legal right to impose and it is an agreement that they entered into with the United States. Ontario never supported it. We told that to the federal government and to other provincial leaders. We have tried to make the best of a bad situation and we have stood up for Ontario's rights.

**Mr Len Wood:** We know that you stand up for your colleagues on Bay Street. What we want to know is, are you going to stand up for jobs for workers in northern Ontario communities who are at risk as a result of you failing to stand up for them, for jobs for the sawmill workers in Ignace and the woodland workers in Kapuskasing for whom a whole way of making a livelihood has been put at risk? Are you going to stand up and speak for these workers who are at risk of losing their jobs?

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** We have been standing up for the working people in this province for a year and a half, to try to reduce the debt and the burden that has been placed upon all working people.

The federal government, as the opposition know —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Nepean, come to order. Thank you.

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** As I was mentioning, the federal government has the legal right to do this. Ontario never supported it, and we spoke to that. We have said that they have to implement the quota, and they are going about implementing it.

Ontario has elected 98 out of 99 MPs of the federal government. They have the legal right to do it. The third party knows that and they are trying to mislead the public into saying this is an Ontario issue. It's not. We have, for northern Ontario, reinstated the heritage fund. We are also trying to work with forest industry products companies to diversify our markets, and that has been well received.

## SEPTIC SYSTEMS

**Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** My question is for the Minister of Environment and Energy. Recent changes —

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Riverdale. Thank you.

**Mr Grimmett:** Recent Who Does What changes, Minister, have indicated that the municipal governments will be responsible for inspections of septic systems, particularly the part VIII inspections which have traditionally been done by your ministry. I've had numerous questions from constituents in my riding about this, and I'd like you to assure the people in my riding that the municipalities in my riding will have the capacity to carry on these part VIII inspections of septic systems.

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** This is an important question, particularly for rural Ontario. We are planning to put municipalities in charge of inspecting and approving this particular kind of sewage treatment in the rural areas. We believe,



however, it's necessary for the inspectors to be properly certified and taught how these particular systems should be put in and that the installer should be certified as well.

We believe that by devolving this on the municipalities, they can recoup their costs, they can provide a more timely service, and with the proper certification and teaching of how this should be done, we can have improved systems across the province, and I think it's a win-win situation for all.

1450

## GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Mr Speaker, on a point of privilege: It's in relation to the point of privilege I raised regarding government advertising last week. I have a further submission. I'm awaiting with some anticipation your ruling, but I want to refer you to the statement made in this House on January 13 by the Honourable Al Leach, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, on Who Does What.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. I need to hear this point of privilege. If you have a meeting, I suggest that if you could take it outside, I'd appreciate it.

**Mr Wildman:** Thank you, Speaker. I'm referring to the statement by the minister in the House in which he outlines in very general terms the agenda for the government that was being introduced last week. He states in it, "We simply don't need every layer of government we have now or the cumbersome bureaucracies supporting them." Further on he says, "We believe our decisions will" — that is, the decisions —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Look, I can't hear the point of order. If you have a meeting, go outside and take up the meeting, please. Thank you. Member for Algoma.

**Mr Wildman:** Thank you, Speaker. Further on, the minister says, "We believe our decisions" — that is, the decisions related to the legislation that was being introduced last week — "will result in simpler, smaller, more accountable and less costly government at both the provincial and municipal levels."

The very same day that the minister made that statement in the House, his ministry issued a press release which I have submitted to you, dated January 13, 1997. The press release is entitled "Ads to Explain Plans for Better, Less Costly Government." In that news release it states, "The advertisements will tell people how the government is untangling the bureaucracy that drives up the cost of government services." Then there's a quote from the minister saying, "That's why we're making government smaller, simpler and less expensive."

I submit to you, Speaker, that the wording in the press release explaining the reasons for the advertisements is almost word for word the wording in the minister's statement. That is the point, that the advertisements are directly related to the legislation the minister was introducing in his statement and referring to in his statement, and we now have a situation where the government is advertising as if — actions have been taken by the government as if legislation has indeed been passed when

it has only been introduced at first reading. As I submitted to you in my point of privilege last week, based on the decisions and the statements made by Speaker Fraser in the House of Commons and Speaker Warner in this Legislative Assembly, those two Speakers criticized governments for doing just that.

**The Speaker:** Again, I'll take it as notice and I'll report back. As far as the reporting out on that point of privilege, I think I could say fairly safely that I will be coming to the House some time this week with a decision, hopefully by as early as Wednesday.

## MOTIONS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** I move that Mr Danford and Mr Cleary exchange places in the order of precedence for private members' public business and that the House will commence at 11 am on Thursday, January 23, to discuss ballot item number 57 only.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

### COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTIONS

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** I move that the following substitutions be made to the membership of the standing committees:

On the standing committee on estimates, Mr McLean be substituted for Mrs Elliott; on the standing committee on general government, Mrs Munro be substituted for Mr Carroll; on the standing committee on finance and economic affairs, Mr Rollins be substituted for Mr Arnott; on the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly, Mrs Marland be substituted for Mr Clement; on the standing committee on the Ombudsman, Mr Murdoch be substituted for Mr Galt and Mr O'Toole be substituted for Mrs Marland; on the standing committee on public accounts, Mr Shea be substituted for Mr Gilchrist; on the standing committee on regulations and private bills, Mr Gilchrist be substituted for Mr Shea, Mr Arnott be substituted for Mr Rollins, and Mrs Ross be substituted for Mr O'Toole; on the standing committee on resources development, Mrs Elliott be substituted for Mr Gilchrist, Mr O'Toole be substituted for Mr Carroll, and Mr Galt be substituted for Mr Murdoch; on the standing committee on social development, Mr Carroll be substituted for Mrs Ross.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

## PETITIONS

### NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I have affixed my signature.

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads as follows:

"Whereas Mike Harris and Charles Harnick promised to improve the family support program; and

"Whereas Mike Harris promised in the Common Sense Revolution that 'government should concentrate its efforts on tracking down deadbeat parents and enforcing payment orders'; and

"Whereas the closure of the family support plan's regional offices have caused a decrease of quality service and lengthened delays; and

"Whereas cuts to the family support plan have eliminated community-based services, replaced enforcement staff with technology and limited communication;

"We, the undersigned, demand that Mike Harris reopen the regional offices and guarantee adequate staffing numbers to provide quality service to recipients and children."

This is signed by 17 citizens who live in the riding of Sudbury East. I agree with them and I have affixed my signature to it.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Toni Skarica (Wentworth North):** I don't believe will overstate matters by indicating that today is a pivotal day in the history of the town of Dundas, which has a population of 20,000 and is nestled in the riding of Wentworth North. This year, Dundas either turns 150 years old or becomes extinct forever. Today there are 150 residents, in fact closer to 200, in the galleries on both sides of you and in front of you who have come to the Legislature to be heard and to present me with a petition and to present the House with a petition. What's significant about the petition is that it bears approximately 1,000 signatures.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Wentworth North, I appreciate this, but this is petitions. I need to hear your petition.

**Mr Skarica:** It is as follows:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"We object to the recently proposed supercity model for restructuring local government within Hamilton-Wentworth.

"Specifically we oppose any model which would dissolve the town of Dundas.

"We insist that any model for local government reform guarantee full citizen input and support prior to its implementation."

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** You're supporting it, aren't you, Tony?

**Mr Skarica:** In response to the opposition, I indeed support it and have signed the petition. I am one of 9,000 people who have signed it out of a population of 16,000 voters.

#### PAY EQUITY

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** "Whereas pay equity must remain a separate, proactive law with a distinct and properly funded commission and tribunal;

"Whereas unions must stay as equal partners in the pay equity process;

"Whereas the poorest-paid women in the public sector deserve pay equity. You took it away through the omnibus Bill 26;

"Whereas there is a need to restore funding to PEALS — Pay Equity Advocacy and Legal Services. Women fighting for their rights under the law must be supported;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to commit to supporting pay equity legislation."

This petition is signed and supported by a large number of citizens across the province, and I have affixed my signature.

#### ONTARIO CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTE

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a petition which is addressed to the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"Whereas we, the undersigned, believe that helping reduce crime and abuse in our communities is our responsibility as employees of the Ministry of Correctional Services, as professionals in related fields and as concerned citizens;

"That closing institutions which provide specialized services to women and treatment to men does not achieve that goal;

"That physical, emotional and sexual abuse is often transmitted from one generation to the next, with tremendous cost to society;

"That treatment aimed at breaking that cycle must include the abuser so that another generation of children is not raised with the same destructive lessons;

"That," as Mr Ross Virgo has stated, "the Ontario Correctional Institute is a therapeutic community known around the world for their techniques;



"That research statistics support anecdotal evidence that we are effective in changing abusive behaviour;

"That a therapeutic community cannot exist in a superprison....

"Save victims and money by keeping what works open."

This is signed by 16 residents of the province of Ontario, and I have affixed my signature to it.

1500

#### BEAR HUNTING

**Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre):** I present, on behalf of 136 voters from my riding of Halton Centre, a petition to end the spring bear hunt.

"Whereas bears are hunted in the spring after they have come out of hibernation; and

"Whereas 30% of the bears killed in the spring are female, some with cubs; and

"Whereas 80% of the orphaned cubs do not survive the first year; and

"Whereas 95.3% of the bears killed by non-resident hunters and 54% killed by resident hunters are killed over bait; and

"Whereas Ontario still allows the limited use of dogs in bear hunting; and

"Whereas bears are the only large mammals hunted in the spring; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals that are hunted over bait; and

"Whereas there are only six states in the United States which still allow a spring hunt;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to amend the Game and Fish Act to prohibit the hunting of bears in the spring and to prohibit the use of baiting and dogs in all bear hunting activities."

I support the petition and I affix my name.

#### EDUCATION REFORM

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** I have a petition to present to the Legislature of Ontario on behalf of residents of my riding, and I'd like to read it as follows:

"Whereas the Harris government is proposing tremendous changes to education services in Ontario;

"Whereas the government's obsession with the fiscal bottom line will result in a reduction of the quality of education services for our children;

"Whereas inclusive and open consultation on education reform has not taken place;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario reconsider its direction in terms of education policy and that they halt any further changes to the education system until a thorough and inclusive review has taken place."

I too concur with the petitioners and I will affix my signature to it.

#### YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** I have a petition from the students at St Mary's Secondary School in

Cobourg, addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned, as youths of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Youth unemployment is over double the national adult average, nearly 20%. We, as youths and potential employees, feel that this is unacceptable. We strongly urge that the provincial government take further steps immediately to ensure better prospects for youth employment in the future."

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview):** My petition is from various citizens of Metropolitan Toronto. It reads as follows:

"Whereas bigger government is not better and the Mike Harris government has no right to dictate a megacity upon the citizens of Metro Toronto;

"Whereas the megacity is being imposed upon 2.3 million citizens in Metro Toronto without giving people a voice in the future of their cities and neighbourhoods;

"Whereas the megacity could lead to mega-property tax increases, mega-user fees and mega-cuts in services;

"Whereas the Tories never proposed abolishing local government in favour of bigger government during the election campaign;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"To give the 2.3 million people in Metro Toronto a say in the future of their cities and stop the imposition of a megacity."

I affix my signature.

#### NUCLEAR WEAPONS

**Mr John L. Parker (York East):** I have a petition here which bears the signatures of some 26 Toronto-area residents, including that of Dr Foster Smith of 14 William Morgan Drive, that reads in summary as follows:

"We, the undersigned, petition that whereas there continue to exist over 30,000 nuclear weapons on the earth; and

"Whereas the continuing existence of nuclear weapons poses a threat to the health and survival of human civilization and the global environment; and

"Whereas the Secretary General of the United Nations, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, has said that the most safe, sure and swift way to deal with the threat of nuclear arms is to do away with them in every regard; and

"Whereas Canada and all state parties to the 1969 United Nations Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons reaffirmed their commitment to undertake to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament;

"Therefore your petitioners pray and request that the Parliament of Ontario support the immediate initiation and conclusion, by the year 2000, of an international convention which will set out a binding timetable for the abolition of all nuclear weapons."

## FIRE SAFETY

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** I have a petition in response to Bill 84 sent in to me from some Thunder Bay firefighters.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the firefighters of Thunder Bay and Ontario are very concerned about Bill 84;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 is unfair;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 is discriminatory;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 endangers the wellbeing of the people of Ontario;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 requires extensive changes;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 needs broad provincial public hearings before implementation;

"We, the undersigned, therefore petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand the Solicitor General to rewrite Bill 84 before being enacted into law and only after extensive public hearings across Ontario."

I am pleased to sign my name to that petition.

## PUBLIC LIBRARIES

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas we believe that provincial interest in public libraries in Ontario is fundamental to the rights of all Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to maintain the provincial interest in public libraries by ensuring the continuance of the following:

"(1) grants to ensure that all Ontarians have equalized access to library materials and services;

"(2) coordination of resource-sharing programs such as interlibrary loan and Internet access;

"(3) policy to ensure the future of the network of Ontario public libraries;

"(4) provincial assistance directly to libraries at the service level, for example, through Southern Ontario Library Service and Ontario Library Service-North;

"(5) legislation that maintains the autonomy of public library boards."

This is signed by different people from throughout my riding.

## HOTEL DIEU HOSPITAL

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** My petition is to the government of Ontario.

"Since the Hotel Dieu Hospital has played and continues to play a vital role in the delivery of health care services in St Catharines and the Niagara region;

"Since Hotel Dieu has modified its role over the years as part of a rationalization of medical services in St Catharines and has assumed the position of a regional health care facility in such areas as kidney dialysis and oncology;

"Since the Niagara region is experiencing underfunding in the health care field and requires more medical services and not fewer services;

"Since Niagara residents are required at present to travel outside of the Niagara region to receive many specialized services that could be provided in city hospi-

tals and thereby not require local patients to make difficult and inconvenient trips down our highways to other centres;

"Since the Niagara hospital restructuring committee used a Toronto consulting firm to develop its recommendations and was forced to take into account a cut of \$40 million in funding for Niagara hospitals when carrying out its study;

"Since the population of the Niagara region is older than that in most areas of the province and more elderly people tend to require more hospital services;

"We, the undersigned, request that the government of Ontario keep the election commitment of Premier Mike Harris not to close hospitals in our province, and we call upon the Premier to reject any recommendations to close Hotel Dieu Hospital in St Catharines."

I affix my signature to this petition as I am in full agreement with its contents.

## HIGHWAY SAFETY

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** On behalf of the residents of my riding, I wish to submit a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas we, the undersigned, are residents of Cochrane North;

"We are very concerned about the severe road conditions in the area, specifically on Highway 11 between Smooth Rock Falls and Kapuskasing. This part of the road is extremely dangerous during wintertime. We are asking the government to take the necessary measures to ensure our safety on our roads."

I support this petition and I affix my signature to it.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre):** I have a petition related to cooperative housing which I wish to present to the Legislature.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** This is addressed to the Legislature of Ontario from residents of my community and I wish to read it to the Chair.

"Whereas the Harris government's proposal to create a megacity bureaucracy will result in less responsive municipal government;

"Whereas the residents of North York are satisfied with the level of service afforded by their local government;

"Whereas the proposed changes will create a giant bureaucracy that will reduce service and eliminate responsive local government;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"That the Harris government withdraw its proposal for a megacity and that they work with the local municipal council to reform the system within the framework which currently exists. We want to save our city — North York."

It is signed. I will sign it myself.



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## SCHOOL PRAYERS

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly from the Grand Orange Lodge of Ontario West.

"Being a firm supporter of the public school system and the Protestant faith;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the government of Ontario to reinstate the Lord's Prayer in the public school system of Ontario."

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

WATER AND SEWAGE SERVICES  
IMPROVEMENT ACT, 1997LOI DE 1997 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION  
DES SERVICES D'EAU ET D'ÉGOUT

Mr Sterling moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 107, An Act to enact the Municipal Water and Sewage Transfer Act, 1997 and to amend other acts with respect to water and sewage / *Projet de loi 107, Loi visant à édicter la Loi de 1997 sur le transfert des installations d'eau et d'égout aux municipalités et modifiant d'autres lois en ce qui a trait à l'eau et aux eaux d'égout.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** This bill does two things. The bill sets up the legislative framework to transfer the ownership of 25% of the sewage and water plants to the rightful owners: the municipalities from across this province. The second part of the bill deals with the approval of septic systems in rural parts of Ontario and sets up the legislative framework to transfer this responsibility to local municipalities in order to provide that service.

STREAMLINING OF ADMINISTRATION  
OF PROVINCIAL OFFENCES ACT, 1997LOI DE 1997 SIMPLIFIANT  
L'ADMINISTRATION EN CE QUI A TRAIT  
AUX INFRACTIONS PROVINCIALES

Mr Harnick moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 108, An Act to deal with the prosecution of certain provincial offences, to reduce duplication and to streamline administration / *Projet de loi 108, Loi traitant des poursuites concernant certaines infractions provinciales, réduisant le double emploi et simplifiant l'administration.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

LOCAL CONTROL OF  
PUBLIC LIBRARIES ACT, 1997LOI DE 1997 SUR LE CONTRÔLE LOCAL  
DES BIBLIOTHÈQUES PUBLIQUES

Ms Mushinski moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 109, An Act to amend the Public Libraries Act to put authority, responsibility and accountability for providing and effectively managing local library services at the local level / *Projet de loi 109, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les bibliothèques publiques de façon à situer à l'échelon local les pouvoirs, la responsabilité et l'obligation de rendre compte concernant la fourniture et la gestion efficace des services locaux de bibliothèque.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

## OPPOSITION DAY

## METROPOLITAN TORONTO REFERENDUM

Mr Hampton moved opposition day motion number 1:

Whereas the government of Ontario has introduced Bill 103, An Act respecting the City of Toronto, which will affect municipal representation and public services for every citizen in Metropolitan Toronto; and

Whereas the mayors of municipalities within Metropolitan Toronto have decided to conduct a public referendum on the province's legislation, to ensure that the voice of all citizens is heard; and

Whereas the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has expressed concern that the question on any referendum ballot might be subject to manipulation, in order to affect the outcome;

Therefore, this House demands that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing meet with the mayors of Metropolitan Toronto's municipalities to draft a referendum question which fairly and accurately describes the government's proposal for an amalgamated city of Toronto; and further, that the Legislative Assembly respect the results of the referendum.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I would ask for consent that the member for Beaches-Woodbine can kick off the debate for us.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** I'm glad to have an opportunity to spend a bit of time in this House talking about the importance of democracy in the province of Ontario and particularly with respect to this government's treatment of Metro Toronto, the citizens of Metro Toronto and the local governments of Metro Toronto.

Our opposition day motion that we put forward is one that we feel is very necessary to have debated in this House and to have the responses of the three political parties on the record in this House, because I tell you, it has been very difficult — in fact, it's been near impossible — to get any kind of a commitment from this Conservative government with respect to the process of dealing with Bill 103, which most people refer to as the megacity bill, that being the legislation proposed by the government which will amalgamate all the cities within Metro Toronto into one megacity, one supercity.

You know that this is an issue that is very controversial. There have been many controversial issues brought forward by this government, and most often we hear from



this government — part of their mantra, in fact — “Everyone knew we were going to do this. It was set out in the Common Sense Revolution. Our commitment was clear. It was debated during the election and the people of the province made a decision when they elected this government.”

One could argue with that point in a number of areas where they've raised that as their defence. But very clearly with respect to this — I was going to say “new initiative” — abomination they're doing in Metro Toronto, nothing could be further from the truth. If one were to have followed the debate during the election campaign, one would very clearly remember the now Premier of this province, the then leader of the third party, saying that what he was committed to was the elimination of Metro government, an upper tier of government, and moving towards what we all suspected would be coming forward in the Golden report, some form of GTA governance.

I remind members of the House, I remind my colleagues that through the discussions and the reports and the studies, the questions that were being examined arose because of the problems of the day. The problems of the day which exist today are problems of the economic region. They're problems of property tax equity across the economic region; they're problems of coordination of transportation services across the economic region; they're problems of coordination of services that relate to development initiatives, like sewer and water systems, across the economic region; they're problems of economic development across the economic region.

I keep using that phrase, “the economic region,” because of course you will know that the economic region is the greater Toronto area, the GTA; that is, cities within Metro, the Metropolitan Toronto region, and what is often referred to as the 905 belt, but including regions of Mississauga and Peel, the cities of Brampton and Vaughan, out into the Durhams. That whole area is part of the greater Toronto area economic region.

I come back to something that has just been confounding since this government has taken this 180-degree turn from what the Premier, then leader of the third party, said during the election campaign. I come back to this problem: If the problems are of the economic region, how can the solution be just Metro Toronto? It can't. I put it to you that it can't.

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In our government that was moving ahead, that was committed to moving quickly on the Golden report, you will recall, Madam Speaker, they shortened the time frame for the Golden commission to do its work and there was work left undone as a result of that shortened time frame. I think that was unfortunate, but the government said it was because it wanted to move quickly.

They got Golden, and what did they do? They then appointed Burnham to go out and try to get a different answer because their political colleagues in parts of the 905 region didn't like the Golden solution. Then after the second report came down, they appointed yet a third commission, the Who Does What panel, to look at all these issues. None of them has come to the conclusion the government is now proceeding with and implementing, not any of the reports and studies.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs is wont to repeat over and over again that this has been studied to death. In fact, in the most recent times, the studies that have examined the economic region and how to bring health, wealth and wellbeing to the economic region, not one of those studies, considered studies, not one of those reports, considered reports, has recommended the abolishment of local governments. Most of them, with respect to the cities, have said, “If you want to make this work, you need to have strong cities; you need to have cities that are close to the people in their neighbourhoods; you need to have cities that are revitalized and that can deal with neighbourhood issues, that can deal with the delivery of the services at that level, as well as a broader coordination of economic interests across the region.” We know the government's solution does not do that; in fact it's quite the opposite.

Today the focus of the motion that's before the House is one that deals with democratic process, because not only has this government changed its position 180 degrees from what the Premier said during the election campaign, not only is it proceeding with a policy that is not referred to, mentioned or spoken about in the Common Sense Revolution, which is what they hold up every other time they want a defence for what they're doing — they don't want to listen to people — not only is there no reference, no base, no history to this, and not only did it come out of the blue in August or September of last year as supposedly just a thought, an idea, a dream, a twinkle in the eye of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, but now we see legislation in the House in that short a period of time. Madam Speaker, you'll know, having been a former cabinet minister, that things don't move that quickly through the bureaucracy, that these plans had to be in place being churned away while all the supposed consultation through the Who Does What process was under way. Not only all that, but we have a policy that virtually every single municipal government, city government that is affected has opposed, and through polling a majority of residents in each of those cities; therefore, a majority of residents in Metropolitan Toronto oppose the direction this government is imposing, is forcing on the area of Metropolitan Toronto.

The natural response from people in a democratic society is to say: “Listen, we want to have our say. We want to have some input into this process.” That grassroots uprising, reflected through the democratically elected city councils, has been given an expression through a decision by those cities to pursue a referendum vote on the question, “Do you want your city to be amalgamated, along with the other cities in Metro Toronto, into one megacity?” That's a reasonable question.

But perhaps the Minister of Municipal Affairs thinks that question isn't well worded. If that were the problem, one would think some discussion between the minister and the mayors might resolve that problem. The mayors have offered that over the course of the last two months as they were moving towards the development of such a question. The minister has steadfastly refused to sit down and have a discussion with the mayors about what the question should be, and yet hides behind an accusation



that whatever question they put forward will be a loaded question, will be a biased question, couldn't possibly give a clear answer to such a complex problem, hides behind that as a defence of why he sees no need for the government of Ontario to listen to the democratic expression of the people of Metro Toronto, as will be provided through this referendum vote.

I don't think that's good enough in a democracy. I'll tell you very honestly, I'm a sceptic about the tool of referenda. I think they have to be used very carefully. I know the government, through discussions in one of the standing committees, has been proposing the introduction of legislation to allow for referenda in the province. How ironic. Here's a government that's promoting this as a mechanism of grass-roots democracy, yet when the real opportunity is here before them, they do everything they can to discredit the process, to discredit those who would come forward with a question, to discredit essentially the democratic expression of the people of Metro Toronto. They say, "It doesn't matter what you say; we're not going to listen to you." I don't know how people can stand for that.

I don't think it matters whether you support the concept of the megacity or you're opposed to the concept of the megacity. When there is such controversy, when there is such social change happening at such a rapid pace, when people are concerned and the majority of people, as far as we know, through the expressions of polling, have opposed this, how can the government simply say, "We're not going to do anything to facilitate a testing of public opinion on this, our major platform in this area of municipal reform in Metro Toronto"? How can they say that the tool they propose to be a democratic tool, a referendum — in this case referenda, a number across the cities — is not an appropriate tool? How can they hide behind a defence that the question will be biased when they refuse to sit down and help shape the question?

Our motion is directed towards this. We're asking that the Minister of Municipal Affairs sit down with the mayors of the cities and work together to develop a question that is appropriate in his mind to test the opinion of the citizens: a very democratic request and a very democratic procedure that should be followed by a government that purports to support grass-roots, local, citizen-initiated referenda.

The government speaks often in response to this by saying, "Let's get it out to committee and let's hear from people," and raises concerns that the opposition is stalling letting it get out to committee. Fair enough. The New Democratic Party is in fact stalling at this point in time, but with very good reason: because we've had no commitment from the government with respect to how long those hearings are going to be, with respect to how many people will be heard. We know that 500 to 600 people have applied already and the notice hasn't even gone out for committee hearings yet. We've had no commitment from the government that people who want to be heard will be heard or that there will be every effort to facilitate that.

We've had no commitment from the government that they don't intend to ram this through on third reading

before the results of the referenda are known. How can you claim to be democratic? You know that a citizens' vote is coming up and we can't even get a commitment from you that third reading won't be passed until after we know what the democratic wish of the citizens of Toronto and Etobicoke and Scarborough and York and East York and North York is.

I understand if you say you're not going to pay any attention to it. I think that's foolish, but you are the provincial government; you are the government of the day. You can make that decision. But to say you're not even going to allow the results of that democratic expression to be known before you take your final decision — how can anyone view that as serious consultation, as a serious democratic process? How can anyone view it other than as a government that wants to ram this through and undermine the efforts of the cities to have a referendum, a government that doesn't want those results to mean anything, in fact doesn't want the vote to take place, and so is committed to ramming it through?

We have had two days of debate on this bill under the rules of the House. So far that's actually been a total of about an hour and 30 minutes of debate. Under the rules of this House, when there are three days of debate — it doesn't matter how long we spend on it in that particular day — the government is in a position to move what's called a time allocation motion. I'm not going to get into all the picayune detail about this, but what it means is the government can bring forward a motion at that time and not before then that says: "This is when second reading will be over. This is how long there'll be for hearings. This is when third reading will take place. This is when the vote will take place," all set out.

1530

Normally that would be open to discussion with the parties. But this government has not given any commitment, has not given any indication that they will talk to us about whether or not that vote on third reading should be delayed until after the referendum.

We've made our case. The government House leader has gone away and simply said: "I'll take it under advisement." That was four days ago. We have still heard nothing back. So if you wonder why, on Thursday, for example, the New Democratic Party, through use of legitimate points of order, stopped the government from being able to call that bill for a third day of reading, I'll tell you, very simply: Because after that, you would have been within your rights under the standing orders to introduce this time allocation motion.

And you know what? We believe there should be some discussion about the process. We believe there should be some commitment about the public hearings and the number of people who will be heard and there should be some commitment about the timing of the third reading vote.

And you know what else? Each day we understand a little bit more about the mega-announcements that the government has made. You know, it has taken several days since Tuesday's downloading of social services and child care and long-term care and housing and transportation, sewer and water etc on to the municipalities; it has taken through until this weekend, until today, to start to



actually get a sense of what the costs are to the citizens of Metro Toronto. We know now it's about \$380 million more cost to Metro Toronto. That means it necessitates a mega-tax increase to pay for the mega-dumping of services.

We need to have public examination, we need to have a full review of the facts and we need some time to have the facts come to the forefront, because this government has rammed through announcement after announcement, has confused all the issues, has muddled it all together, has made it very difficult.

The efforts of the New Democratic Party caucus are to ensure that there is time before this goes out to committee for people to have a full sense of what the government is in fact doing, to ensure there are adequate public hearings so that people can be heard and to ensure that that third reading debate does not occur until after the referendum and the democratic expression of the people of Metro Toronto is known.

That, we believe, is both democratic and reasonable. For that reason we've brought forward this motion and for that reason we will watch with great interest to see how the supposed democrats across the floor, the ones who support referenda, will vote on our motion today.

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** It is a pleasure to speak and participate in the debate today on the opposition day motion by Mr Hampton regarding a referendum on the new amalgamated city of Toronto.

The opposition seems to raise the issue of referendums when it's convenient, that is, when it's an issue that they themselves are not in favour of. The opposition parties, both the Liberals and NDP, and their members continually say that they are the defenders of democracy, today the saviours of democracy, if you listen to them, that they are the only ones who are listening to the people of this province, that they are the ones who have a monopoly on the ability to consult and listen to their constituents. Well, they don't.

Where was the leader of the third party during the last government? Was he advocating a referendum on every piece of legislation that the government of the day was bringing forward? Was he advocating a referendum on each and every one of the 33 tax hikes that his government brought forward? Was he advocating a referendum to ask the people of Ontario if they wanted to see the debt of the province increase by \$50 billion? No, he wasn't.

In fact, in 1992 when the member for York Mills, David Turnbull, presented a private member's bill entitled the Provincial Public Consultation Act, every single NDP member who even bothered to show up for the vote voted against that bill — the supposed democrats we hear today. So I say to the leader of the third party, you and your party are not the great defenders of democracy that you portray yourselves to be.

I represent a riding within the city of Scarborough. The city of Scarborough has decided to have a ballot that can be mailed, faxed, e-mailed or dropped at local city buildings in order to poll the citizens of Scarborough on their thoughts on the amalgamation of seven municipal governments into one.

What will the question be? What safeguards will be in place to ensure that only those who are eligible to vote in a municipal election will be the ones voting in that referendum? Will it truly be a secret ballot? Some have told me that a signature will be required on the ballot. If this indeed is the case, then it is simply not democracy when there's not a vote by secret ballot. Will the decision be considered if it's a 50% majority, a 60% majority, or is it 66%? Will it require a certain percentage of eligible voters to vote? Will it be decisive if only 10% of voters even bother to vote?

There are various ways of gauging the views of our constituents on any issue, and this issue is no different. We can look at the number of letters we receive, the number of phone calls and the discussions we have with our constituents not only in our offices but within the community, including town hall meetings. More people have contacted my office regarding fur trapping in my riding than regarding amalgamation of the city of Scarborough within a new, amalgamated city of Toronto.

Those opposed to amalgamation will lead us to believe that all neighbourhood communities will suddenly disappear on January 1, 1998. Those opposed will lead us to believe that local representation is going to be lost and local input in decision-making is going to be lost on January 1, 1998.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** What are you afraid of?

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Algoma, come to order.

**Mr Newman:** This is not going to happen. You see, I can turn to history to show and actually prove that this will not happen.

My community of Scarborough has a rich history as a municipality that has evolved and changed over time. It has not always been a city as some may lead us to believe. Present-day Scarborough was first inhabited by aboriginal peoples in approximately 1250.

**Mr Wildman:** They did things by consensus.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Algoma, come to order.

**Mr Newman:** In 1796 the first Scarborough land patent was granted by the crown, thus opening the township to settlement. In 1850 Scarborough was incorporated as a self-governing municipality with a population of 3,821 people. In 1967, our country's centennial, Scarborough township became a borough, and in 1983 Scarborough became a city.

In Scarborough we celebrated our bicentennial in 1996, but it was 200 years of Scarborough not as a city, not as a borough, not as a township but as a settlement. I am confident that in the year 2096 there will be a wonderful tricentennial celebration in Scarborough. But throughout all the changes in Scarborough, from township to borough to city, there has never been a referendum conducted on any of these changes.

We in Scarborough know what a great place Scarborough is to live in, but where would we be today if that township of 3,821 people had stayed as a township? We wouldn't have the wonderful community that we enjoy today had the visionaries of the past not been progressive in bringing about much-needed reform. We wouldn't have the community we have today unless change had



been made in the past. In Scarborough we've had 171 years of Scarborough as a township, 16 years of Scarborough as a borough and only 13 years of Scarborough as a city.

I see Bill 103 taking the people of Scarborough into the future to be part of a single, unified city where taxpayers pay less tax and see barriers to growth and investment removed and jobs created. I see Scarborough and its citizens having real input, greater input into the democratic process through community councils and neighbourhood committees.

Throughout the transformation of Scarborough from township to city the communities that make up Scarborough have remained. Look at atlases from 50, 60, 70 years ago and you will see the communities of L'Amaroux, Malvern, Agincourt, Woburn, Highland Creek, West Hill, Wexford and Birch Cliff; and in my riding of Scarborough Centre, Bendale, Scarborough Village, Scarborough Junction, Cliffside, Cliffcrest and Cedarbrae, just to name a few.

These communities have survived. All these communities and neighbourhoods have survived the transformation from township to borough to city, and I believe they will continue to thrive under a unified city of Scarborough. Why? Because it's people who make communities, not artificial boundaries created by pieces of legislation. They do not make communities.

I will not be supporting this resolution. I appreciate the opportunity to participate in the debate today on Mr Hampton's resolution.

1540

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** It's a great pleasure to support this resolution by the third party. I think the third party is trying to emphasize the point that no matter how many times the government makes excuses for why referenda should not be held on March 3, the fundamental issue here is that they're afraid of what the people of Scarborough, the people of East York, the people of Toronto, York, Etobicoke and North York will say. They know that most of them do not accept this complete change in direction of this government. Traditionally, people who advocated referenda said they were needed because if a government changed course and a government didn't have a mandate, a referendum would have a very valuable role to play, and this is a perfect example of a government changing course.

As you know, in the election and prior to June 1995, this government categorically stated in the Trimmer report that it was going to support, enforce and encourage local government. They said categorically they were going to replace Metro and keep Scarborough and the other five municipalities. Now this government has changed course.

Also, the other thing this government has changed course on is referenda. The now Premier, when he was Leader of the Opposition, called for referenda on everything from casinos on down. They were advocates of direct democracy. Now, when the most fundamental change is being made in the history of this province in terms of local government and how it impacts on 2.5 million people in Toronto, they are all of a sudden no longer supporting referenda.

Whose purpose does it serve now to change course? Now is the time for the people to have a say, a direct say. This government is advocating even wider referenda in the future, so if that's the government position before the election and after this megacity bill, you notice there is the gap right now. Before the election, they said, "Yes, we want referenda," and in the future they want referenda, but now when the future of the metropolitan area of Toronto is at stake, they say no. That is what is most upsetting to the people of Metropolitan Toronto. They do not believe this government when they say there are all kinds of excuses and they mention all the complications. This government is saying we need to have voting by phone, voting by e-mail, voting by mail, so why would they oppose it now when they are recommending it in legislation as in Bill 86 where they are advocating wider use of voting?

The trouble is this government is not listening. The Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs have said: "We don't care whether you have a referendum. We won't listen." If that isn't an affront to basic democracy, what is, when they say categorically that they won't listen to a referendum that the people in each one of the six cities have said they want? What is the harm in having those referenda? Why not wait until the people have a say? They might get some good ideas. They might find out how costly this megacity is going to be. I think today we're beginning to realize, through the smokescreen of propaganda, that this megacity bill is also part of this mega-dumping of social services, unheard of in the western world, on municipal property taxpayers. If there was ever a time for the residents to have a say, it is now, because not only are they getting a megacity, they're getting a mega-dumping of provincial responsibility on to the property taxpayers of Scarborough, Etobicoke, East York.

I certainly think there was no mention of mega-dumping of welfare on to property taxpayers during the election campaign of 1995. Not one MPP, I'm sure, ran on that platform of dumping.

Here's what they're going to dump on Metro: \$290 million in general welfare assistance that wasn't there before and now the people of Scarborough will have to pay for, and family benefits. These are income maintenance programs. They don't do this anywhere in the civilized world, they don't dump income maintenance programs on the local taxpayer, because those are the same people who may be out of work or on welfare, so you get a double whammy. You lose your job. You're on welfare. What happens? Welfare rates go up; your taxes go up. That is why in most civilized countries they don't do it.

But here there's been a dramatic shift by this government, a dramatic ideological shift to the extreme right, in offloading this type of maintenance program, and they say to the people of Scarborough and East York and North York, "Oh, you do not have the right to have a say on this dramatic shift." If there's anything as fundamental as this — there's never been this fundamental change in Ontario. It's a radical, extremist change in direction, unheard of in this province, even unheard of in New Jersey, in Michigan.



This is a dramatic shift and why you need a referendum, because when a government makes a dramatic shift in direction, the people should have a right to be heard. That's why a lot of people who at one time thought, "Well, this is just about changing political boundaries and about city halls," know now that this megacity revolution, this mega-revolution is about fundamental structural changes in this province, in how we take care of our poor, our children.

Health care: Incredible. They are telling the people in Scarborough, "You have no say in the fact that the provincial government is going to dump health care on to the property tax." That's what megacity means. You get the megacity and you get the dumping of health care on to the property tax.

Long-term care: \$200 million in Metro dumped on to the property taxpayers. If that isn't a fundamental change — and it's a very shrewd dumping, a very shrewd swap. The government is taking on education and saying, "Oh, we're going to pay for education," but it knows education is controllable. It knows the demographics; in other words, fewer and fewer young people are going to be going through the blip. But this government also knows that the population is aging, so where are the pressures going to be? They're going to be on programs like long-term care, which has gone up a couple of hundred per cent in the last 10 years, a 200% increase at least in long-term-care costs. That's what they're putting on the property tax bill.

You've got welfare, and we went through the welfare explosion in Metro in 1989-90 when the recession hit. At that time in Metro we paid for only 20% of GWA, and that recession manipulated our whole budgetary process at Metro. We had to cut from transit, child care, economic development, transportation, because we had to help people who were losing their jobs. We went through hell trying to manage that welfare explosion in 1989-90, and that was 20%. This government is now going to put 50% of GWA and FBA — family benefits allowance — on to property taxes. This is going to be an explosion that is going to rip apart cities and communities across Ontario.

I can imagine the single-industry towns; in Windsor, if Chrysler goes into a slump. What would happen to Sudbury? What's going to happen to Toronto if there's a slump again like there was in 1989-90?

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Bankruptcy.

**Mr Colle:** There will be bankruptcies. There will be a return of the 1930s. That is why you will see today even acknowledged conservatives saying: "This megacity stuff is madness. People should stop and have a say in this." This is so dramatic even conservatives are standing up and saying: "This is utter nonsense coming from the Harrisites. Utter nonsense."

You've got Mr Bech-Hansen, who's from the board of trade, where the minister made his announcement about that megacity. This conservative economist says, "If the government is absolutely determined to do this, then it must establish a greater Toronto authority to collect the shared taxes or else we're in great risk of turning Metro on to a downward spiral."

Another noted conservative, Metro Councillor Gordon Chong, says, "I can't believe any political party would try

to tear the guts of Metro." "We are the guts of the greater Toronto area, and that's the problem," said Mr Chong, a conservative.

**1550**

It's impossible for taxpayers to be able to absorb this. It's impossible for taxpayers to be able to absorb this megacity. That's why taxpayers should have a say: because there's been a fundamental shift. Even Ralph Klein looks like a boy scout compared to the Harrisites. That is what is happening. If there was ever a time for the people of Ontario to stand up and say, "We have a right to be heard," it is now. Whether they believe in the megacity being good or bad, the megacity now is attached with this dumping, this dramatic reversal.

Another thing that is being dumped on the taxpayers with the megacity: The Metro chairman calls the dumping of subsidized housing a recipe for disaster, because property taxpayers have enough on their plate with all these other things that have been put on their plate. In fact, of the newly amalgamated city's responsibility for social housing Chairman Tonks says, "It's a New York-like recipe for disaster." We're looking to have to pick up over 100,000 units that were built from the 1950s to the 1980s. We don't have the capacity to maintain and update that kind of inventory. There are over 100,000 units, and again, a lot of them were built in the 1950s and 1960s. They need major renovations.

As you know, this government was going to sell off public housing. Now they've done a very shrewd thing: They've dumped it on the municipalities, so the municipalities will have what choice, especially when many of these buildings need major reinvestment in plumbing, infrastructure, parking garage maintenance, electrical work? These buildings are a ticking tax time bomb for the people of Metropolitan Toronto. Where are they going to get the money from the property tax to pay for all these buildings that have to be rehabilitated, on top of the long-term care, on top of the welfare and family benefits recipients who need help?

Then on top of that we've got the dumping of public transit costs on the municipal taxpayer. There is no city in the world of a major nature that puts 100% of operating costs on the property taxpayer.

It's extremely cynical. Somehow they say, "Well, we'll take education off," but what they've put on are the big-ticket items that are uncontrollable, that in most civilized countries the provincial or state or federal government pays for. In Toronto, in this new mega-mad city they're creating, they're going to do what they've done nowhere else in the world, in Canada or the United States. Show me a city in the world that has 100% financing of public transit from the property tax. It doesn't exist.

There are two alternatives with this megacity. That's why people want a say: because their investment in their homes, in their businesses is at stake. I think a lot of people are starting to see through the mega-smokescreen. They're starting to see through it. Through the smoke-screen they see the dumping of essentially provincial responsibilities on the backs of property taxpayers, who may be seniors, who may be disabled, who may be out of work. They are going to be asked to support income-maintenance programs. You can't do it on the property



tax. It's the most regressive of things to do. If there is ever a time when people in East York, in Toronto, in York should have a say, it is now.

Paul Pagnuelo from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, a friend of the Harrisites, says about Premier Harris and Mr Leach, "Either he should hold a binding referendum to seek the approval of Metro Toronto residents for his election policy reversal or he should do what he said he would if ever he broke an election promise, and that is resign."

This is the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, which is not intimidated by the Harrisites. He says it as it is. He says Harris and Minister Leach should resign because they broke a pre-election promise on referenda and on this reversal. How much clearer or more unequivocal could you get than Paul Pagnuelo saying, "You promised referenda and you promised to resign if you broke a promise"? The megacity was not a promise, and he's broken that promise because in the Trimmer report they said they would strengthen local government.

It's interesting that in Ottawa they are not shoving the megacity down the throats of people; they're going to give them three more years. There's no amalgamation in Ottawa till the year 2000. The people of Metropolitan Toronto are saying: "Is there a different type of democracy here in Toronto than there is for the people of Ottawa? Don't we pay the same taxes? How come we've only got three weeks to decide here in Toronto about the future of our city and in Ottawa they've got till the year 2000?"

As you know, the most critical thing is that Toronto is the economic engine, the cultural and social boiling milieu for economic activity and prosperity. In other words, it's where people can earn a living; they add to the prosperity of the province and they add to the prosperity of all Canadians. Yet this government sees fit to say: "Full steam ahead. We don't care what you say. We're going to ram this legislation through. We're not going to give you a say. Even if you have a say, we're not going to listen to you."

What an affront to basic democracy. How fundamentally contrary to the democratic principles that go back to the Magna Carta. I'll read to you from the Magna Carta, Mr Speaker. I know you're a long-time appreciator of history. In the Magna Carta in 1215 it said: "And the city of London is to have all its ancient liberties and free customs both by land and water. Furthermore, we will grant that all other cities, boroughs, towns and ports shall have all liberties and free customs." This is going back to 1215, that it was always the case where the rights of citizens and cities were recognized.

In this case here this government has said, "We do not recognize or want to hear from you." On the most fundamental change ever seen in Metropolitan Toronto, ever seen in this province, this government is denying people, is denying the taxpayers. The taxpayers of Metropolitan Toronto over the last decades have poured millions and billions into the provincial coffers, yet when their future is being changed, they are told, "We don't want to hear from you; we're going to dictate to you." Simple as that.

Mr Speaker, if you lived in Toronto and the government told you, "We don't want to hear from you; we're going to dictate to you," what would your response be? Would you sit there and take it? I'll tell you, a lot of citizens are not taking it. They're not going to let this government ram this most ludicrous program of devolution, of dumping on to the city that is signalled as the best city in the world to live in. I can imagine if this was some poorer city that's run down and has had tough times, but Toronto is the most economically, culturally, socially viable city probably in the world. Even *Fortune* magazine recognizes that.

How in heck would they come to the conclusion that this city has to be demolished by this government, by the Harrisites? Why do they have to bomb this city? That's what people are starting to say all over Metro. This is like unleashing a bomb on the city of Metropolitan Toronto. For what motive?

It makes no economic sense because, as you know, Wendell Cox, the famous Tory consultant on government downsizing, says this type of megacity amalgamation will cost 20% to 100% more for the taxpayer. Andrew Sancton, the most recognized government restructuring expert out of the University of Western Ontario, said unequivocally that the megacity proposal is utter madness and is going to drive cost up. Yet this government will not give the people a voice.

I applaud the third party for putting this forward, because for a lot of people this city of Toronto is not just politicians or boundaries, it is not just streets, it is made up of people who have contributed to a quality of life that is recognized worldwide. This city has been a gateway to people from all over the world. It has been a very successful experiment in people working and thriving and succeeding economically, socially and politically, and the people in Metropolitan Toronto are saying, "We want a part of this future and a say in our future, how this city changes."

They are so insulted and so disgusted that this government won't even listen. That is what's most terrifying. They can't believe that this government categorically turns its back on them and says, "We won't listen." That is what is most disturbing and gut-wrenching. That's why tonight at Metropolitan United Church, at the corner of Church and Queen streets, right next to St Michael's Hospital, there will be over a thousand people who will stand up to this government and say they will not go down without a fight. They're not going to lie down to the dictates of the Harrisites.

1600

They're going to rally with their local groups, their school groups, their church groups, with their ratepayer groups, with their city halls and they are going to stand up and say: "We pay taxes; we are citizens. You will not dictate to us, because this country and this province and this city deserve better. We have the right to have a say." That's why this resolution should be supported.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** I'm very happy to have the opportunity to speak to the motion presented by our leader. This is an issue of great importance to the people of Metropolitan Toronto — and Ontario, because



what happens in Toronto and Metro affects not just Ontario but the whole economy of all of Canada.

Many people in Toronto and Metropolitan Toronto are upset at the treatment they are getting from the people of the 905 region, and many of them are angry. They're angry that Mike Harris would use the democratic process for those who are outside of the Metro borders, helping them out with a facilitator to determine for themselves how they might want to amalgamate or how they should amalgamate, but in Metropolitan Toronto he has exercised the power of omnipotence to say to them, "This is what we're going to do to you and for you." He has decided for Metro what is good for it. He has abrogated all democratic rights for us here in Metropolitan Toronto because he believes — Mr Leach and Mr Harris and all the others believe — that we don't need to have a democratic voice here in Metropolitan Toronto.

So people are angry. They don't like the fact that the 905 region gets democracy and we got demagoguery here in Metropolitan Toronto. We want the same democracy that everybody else is looking for and deserves, quite rightfully, so as we see these discussions, as people get to see the different treatment they're getting, there is growing anger. That's why we see countless people coming to the meetings in downtown Toronto. They are angry at what this government is doing. They want to be consulted. That's why all the cities in Metropolitan Toronto are having a referendum, and they're having a referendum that is based on the rules that they have already passed with Bill 86.

Bill 86 permits referenda and it allows people to vote by phone, or even to vote by Internet. Some of us raise questions about how they're going to control that, but on the other hand this government has passed Bill 86 and the referendum that we're about to have here in Metropolitan Toronto reflects the spirit of that legislation. We see people like the member for Scarborough Centre very worried about how that referendum is going to be held, yet at the same time, they passed Bill 86 and very shortly they want to pass another bill on referenda, with similar rules. So it appears in great contrast to what they want versus what they say and how they say it.

But this government, and it's typical of its contradictions, is not afraid to contradict itself. In fact, I often see ministers dissemble without flinching an eye, without blinking the eye as well. They do it with a straight face. They even laugh with a straight face. I don't know how they do that, but they do.

On hearings this government says, "Let us hurry into these hearings because we want to hear from the public." I have to tell you this: If this government wants to hear from the public in the way they heard tenants respond to their tenant protection package, God bless us all, because I have to tell you, the members of that committee, including M. Leach, did not listen to one word the tenants and organizations that came to defend tenants had said. Imagine: four weeks of hearings on the so-called tenant protection package and they didn't listen at all to what people had to say.

When we gathered together as a group to discuss how we were going to deal with what we had heard, the committee said, "We don't want to discuss it." Imagine.

Preposterous, a committee sitting together to discuss how we were going to deal with what we heard and they say: "We don't want to discuss it. We are just going to pass what we heard on to M. Leach." What is the purpose of having MPPs if they're not going to do their job?

They say with a great sense of spirit, "Oh, we need to get on with the hearings because we want to hear from the people of Metropolitan Toronto what they have to say about our megacity proposal." I tell you, if they're going to listen to the Metro folks in the same way they listened to tenants, we are in trouble, because they clearly don't listen and don't want to listen.

Beyond that, people want a referendum to be heard because they know this government is not listening. That's why they want the referendum. It is the only tool they've got to get this government to listen. Municipal politicians know that this government is not going to listen to them, but they will be forced to listen to the public in the event that the referendum does not support what this government does.

This government is afraid of that referendum tool. That is why you've heard a number of MPPs and the minister say, "Oh, it's too complicated a question," and some other members say: "Oh, it's too confusing a question. We want to avoid all of that," and they're about to get into passing legislation that deals with these very things. They're afraid to listen to the public, and that's why they don't want to have this referendum. That's why they want to pass this legislation before the referendum.

But if they do that, hell will break out in this place, and not just in this place but all over Metropolitan Toronto, and the effects of that will spill over into your wonderful area of support, the 905. We urge people to be very careful because democracy is growing in Ontario in ways that you will not like, in ways that you Tory-Reform politicians will not like, so you'd best pay heed.

You did not promise this in your agenda, your famous revolutionary agenda, but you're going ahead. Not only did your minister not promise this, your Minister Leach promised to get rid of the Metro government and keep local governments. That's what your minister said.

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr Marchese:** Those Reform-minded politicians to the left of me are babbling out in response to what I'm saying.

Your Premier said he wasn't going to eliminate, obliterate your city-states, your city governments in Metropolitan Toronto, and what does he do? He does the opposite. What kinds of things is this government doing, and are we to trust what this government is doing?

Beyond all this is a megacity that nobody seems to support, that all evidence speaks against. This government wants to forge ahead with something around which there's very little support. But we will see the cost of democracy, the cost of access and the cost of participation. People will feel the effects of that.

In fact, the reason why people are going to those meetings held every Monday is because they're afraid of losing that democracy they cherish, their ability to participate in their local community, and they know they will disappear in a mega-government. They're afraid of the bomb you've just unleashed on Metropolitan Toronto.



I can just picture Mike Harris and his soldiers getting up every morning and saying, "I love the smell of napalm in the morning." They have dumped the biggest bomb on Metropolitan Toronto and we're dealing with that.

1610

They have fixed the property tax issue by eliminating education. Why have they done that to then replace it with an equivalent amount of money on the other side by dumping welfare on property tax owners, by dumping long-term care, housing that's aging and needs immediate repair, actual value assessment that's going to burden people in Metropolitan Toronto? Thirty per cent of people in Metropolitan Toronto are going to get a tax increase as a result of actual value assessment without any support from this government.

It is depressing what this government is doing. People are angry and people feel the hurt of that napalm that you have unleashed on Metropolitan Toronto and they're fighting back. They're fighting back because they don't like the fact that they're going to be taxed heavily as municipalities. The property tax owners are going to have a greater burden for these services that quite properly shouldn't belong there. They belong properly in the hands of a province that has taxing measures that a municipality does not. All I can urge the public that's listening is to, in the words of Dylan Thomas, "rage, rage against" the policies of this government — rage against the policies of this government — and I support those words.

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** It's my pleasure to rise to speak against the motion put forward by the leader of the third party and to comment briefly, because we certainly want to leave time for other members on the government side to comment as well on exactly how flawed the premise is behind this motion itself.

First off, the suggestion that there is any kind of common approach being taken by the six cities is flawed at the outset. They can't agree on the format, they can't agree on the question. They have changed their attitude almost weekly and we have seen anything but a genuine referendum. What we are seeing is nothing more than a \$2.5-million public opinion poll. There is no legitimacy, there is no scientific merit behind what is being proposed by the mayors.

The bottom line is that, if you cut below a handful of politicians who are clearly speaking from a position of trying to maintain the status quo, you see that there is absolutely no support, no support whatsoever for the profligacy and the wastefulness that's being demonstrated by these high-handed and outrageous attempts to waste our tax dollars.

The real process, as every members in this House knows, on how bills before this chamber are debated involves making representations to the MPPs directly and appearing at committee hearings. Now our government committed at the outset that there would be lots of time given to committee hearings, and they will take place. The people who have something constructive to say will have the opportunity to come and speak their piece here at Queen's Park. But more important — and I would expect that my opposition colleagues have the same open-door policy — every one of the 30 members in the

Toronto area is more than happy to hear at first hand whatever kind of position our constituents may take on this issue.

I'd like to share with my colleagues opposite exactly what that has been, what my experience has been in Scarborough East. We have yet to hit three dozen people who have called, written or faxed to our office any kind of commentary, and half of those have been positive. Further, not one person, not one of the 94,000 people in Scarborough East has called to ask to meet me on constituency day, not one. When you get beyond the faxes that come from the 392 exchange, which happens to be Metro Hall and Toronto city hall, I think you can see exactly where the true inspiration behind this call for a so-called referendum is coming. Those are the people who want to maintain the status quo.

One of the scariest things for those of us trying to engage in what we think is useful debate in this chamber is the absolute inability we have on this side to pin down the opposition on any given day. Mr Speaker, as you are well aware, late last year we had a number of committee hearings in this building dealing with the issue of referenda, and indeed it was very enlightening to hear the position taken by both parties opposite at that time. Let me just give you a couple of quotes.

From Sandra Pupatello, the Liberal MPP for Windsor Sandwich: "In effect, you have already got your mandate by the population of Ontario. Now the Conservative government today, and hopefully different later, you have the difficult job of making the decisions on behalf of your regional disparities that are accounted for" — I'm sure you'll indulge grammatical errors — "geographical disparities that are accounted for in your very makeup as representatives. That becomes your difficult task, not to be offloaded through a very simple yes/no question through the method of referendum."

Better than that, though, a quote that embraces both opposition parties in the *Hamilton Spectator*:

"Hamilton East Liberal MPP Dominic Agostino and Hamilton Centre MPP David Christopherson," from the third party, "said referendums are not useful in sorting our municipal restructuring." It will be interesting to see exactly how those two members vote when the vote comes up at 6 o'clock today.

The member for Hamilton East went on to say: "The danger is that you could end up where you govern by referendum all the time. That becomes costly and time-consuming."

But the quotes don't end in those committee hearings. The member who spoke on behalf of the official opposition, the member for Oakwood, a few years ago was not a member in this chamber; he was himself a municipal politician, and I'm sure regrets the fact the *Toronto Star* has a really good archive, because the member for Oakwood said, "York and East York are the poor cousins in Metro's six-member family and should amalgamate for their mutual benefit."

"Mike Colle...said yesterday an organization he's chairman of, Reform York, has been trying to raise the issue of amalgamation for the past eight months." In fact the member, as a councillor in York, put the question to his council and he was soundly rebuffed. But his best



quote was, "Colle thinks the borough should be disbanded, 'because we find our taxes are the highest in Metro and our services, if not the worst, are among the worst in Metro.'" Indeed.

If you go back into history a little further, at the first New Democratic Party municipal nominating convention — we've heard some talk that the whole issue involving the amalgamation of Metro will somehow bring party politics into the municipal scene. I could refer you to any number of pamphlets put out by the members opposite promoting the fact they were the NDP candidates running for Toronto council and the NDP candidates running for the school board. They brought partisan politics to city elections, nothing that's going on in this bill.

At that first New Democratic Party municipal nominating convention, "The policy paper urging amalgamation of the city and the boroughs argues that there would be more equality of services and taxes across the whole Metro area and lead to many savings for the people." I guess that was their belief then, and they suggest somehow it's appropriate for them to go 180 degrees opposite and stand up and flail their hands and suggest that somehow a new position is worthy of meriting their support now.

As you're well aware, all three major Toronto newspapers have come out in support of our position against referenda. The Toronto Star said, "There's something decidedly wrong about lame-duck councils, who won't be around to face the voters' judgement again, squandering fistfuls of money on a consultation that won't mean a thing."

And the Globe and Mail said it very well: "The Harris government has the constitutional power, the public responsibility and the political mandate to act. A referendum on the issue is not called for."

I could go on and on with the quotes from the lips of the very members opposite, in committee and outside this building, suggesting that referendum is not the way to the go, but let's get back to the very issue at the heart of the motion here today, the suggestion that somehow, despite the fact that we have said that the process within this government is very open and accessible, that there will be public hearings, that the members are entertaining any submissions made by their constituents, we spend these millions of dollars, estimated as high as \$7 million by one of the mayors, on a full-fledged referendum campaign.

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**Mr Colle:** You spent \$8 million on the ad campaign.

**Mr Gilchrist:** Let me just say something in response to the member for Oakwood: Maybe you could get your numbers straight; \$8 million was what was spent by the party for all advertising all last year, which is less than the third party spent from April to July in the run-up to the provincial election. There has been no spending done so far. The \$800,000 is being spent by the PC Party right now. You might want to revisit those numbers before you misspeak yourself in this chamber.

With the fact that there is no common approach, the fact that what is being proposed out there is so fundamentally flawed, it is a travesty even to refer to it as a

referendum. A referendum, anywhere in the world where it is part of the democratic process, involves the representation by individuals, not politicians squeezed in the middle who are concerned about their own jobs; it involves a set percentage, in most jurisdictions 10% to 15%, who would sign a petition to submit to the government, challenging it to put a question forward.

We haven't seen that kind of process. Instead, we have six governments that are stacking the question and stacking the deck by funding only the anti, by funding only one side of the debate. For anyone opposite to suggest that that's democratic is the height of hypocrisy. If they were even funding both sides of the issue, perhaps it would be fair, perhaps it would be appropriate to suggest.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Excuse me. There's too much talking. Each party gets the opportunity to debate and we'll all want to hear. I wish you would take the opportunity of using it in your turn. The member for Scarborough East.

**Mr Gilchrist:** I'd like to think we accord some level of decorum to the other side when they're up, but we'll just speak a little louder if that's what needs to be done to make sure that the real story is getting out there.

Just to continue that point, I would challenge the members opposite to get their municipal friends, who are so bound and determined to fund the anti side, to take the democratic step of instead sharing that money honestly with the groups that are in favour, the groups that support the cost savings and the efficiencies and the new and innovative ways we'll be able to deliver better services at lower costs to the people all across Metro. I challenge them to level the playing field. But they won't do that. They won't do that because they want to make sure that only one side of this issue is heard.

Let me just speak very briefly to one example; namely, in my home community of Scarborough. The bottom line is that Scarborough has now suggested that it will mail two ballots to every household. It doesn't matter how many voters are in that household; there will be two ballots. Which means that if there is one person in that household, they clearly have an advantage; if there are four people, I guess the decision will have to be made who gets to vote and who doesn't.

Forget the premise behind everything else in our democracy of a secret ballot; in order to be received, you have to sign your name, and it will stay on the public record how you voted. This is a travesty, an absolute travesty.

But it goes further than that. Their only control will be to refer to the voters' list as a ballot comes in. However, I mentioned a second ago that a single-person household will get two ballots. If, for example, as one of the newspapers correctly pointed out, as the reporter in the Scarborough Mirror observed last week, you find out that your neighbour is opposed and you support, what will happen if you send a second ballot with his or her name on it? Will the clerk disqualify both ballots they're to receive, the fraudulent one and the legitimate one? There are no controls whatsoever.



**Mr Colle:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: How dare he accuse the taxpayers of Scarborough of engaging in fraudulent practices? That is not acceptable. That is an affront to every citizen —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** I remind the member for Oakwood, there are two —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** That is not a point of order. The member for Scarborough East.

**Mr Gilchrist:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I guess what the member is referring to is some of the issues that have gone on in his town of York in recent years. That fact of the matter is that I referred to an article in the Scarborough Mirror.

**Mr Colle:** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: The contempt that this member has shown for his own citizens of Scarborough and my citizens of York is not acceptable. It is an affront to all those citizens and to this Legislature that a member of this Parliament could stand up and accuse the citizens of York and the citizens of Scarborough of engaging in fraudulent election practices. I think you as Speaker should stand up and ask him to withdraw that defamatory accusation. That is uncalled for.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Most times I am a reasonable person, and most times I have a great deal of patience and respect and so on. I am losing it very quickly, and I thought I should explain that to you.

Particularly to the member for Oakwood, I would like to explain that that is not a point of privilege. I would ask the member for Scarborough East to continue.

**Mr Gilchrist:** Let me just make it very clear, because back in the lofty reaches of the back row over there, perhaps the member did not hear me clearly. I was referring to a comment made by the reporter in the Scarborough Mirror, who, by the way, is opposed to the unification of the cities. He posited the suggestion that anyone in Scarborough —

**Mr Colle:** And you're reinforcing it.

**Mr Gilchrist:** He posited it as a point of illustrating this is not a referendum; this is not a fair test of the voters' opinion; this is not an honest campaign. This is a seriously flawed —

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** Steve, is that what you believe?

**Mr Gilchrist:** I will not withdraw a reference to what has been quoted in the Scarborough Mirror.

**The Acting Speaker:** I want to warn the member for Oakwood and the member for Sudbury East to come to order and to stay to order, please.

**Mr Gilchrist:** I know the member opposite is very sensitive about the fact that when he votes, presumably, if he votes, in favour of this motion, he is going totally contrary to everything that is recorded in all the annals of the various newspapers on his personal position on referendum and on amalgamations.

The bottom line is that the whole premise that we are debating here today is so utterly flawed. There is no suggestion out there at all, and not one mayor, not one council has maintained that a fair and honest test that would involve all of the normal scrutiny that is involved

in elections and in normal referendums where they occur around the world — not one of the councils has seen fit to embrace that idea and to spend the funds necessary to do that. Instead, while continuing to throw up the smokescreen, the impression that there is some kind of accountability attached to the process they are now advocating, the bottom line is that to save face, they are still going to spend \$2.5 million. They are still going to waste taxpayers' money that could better go to policing or any of the other services delivered across this city. The bottom line is that this is nothing more than saving face and maintaining the status quo.

This is not a referendum. It is an offence to even use that term. It is an opinion poll. It's a survey. It has no more scientific validity — no one has even defined the terms of reference. If 10% of the people respond and 5.1% are opposed to this, does that mean that the 94.9% who don't cast their vote in opposition are truly against this, or does it mean that if they are not even worked up enough to return the ballot or to make the phone-in submission, as North York is advocating — doesn't that tell you that really the people are supporting this bill, that they're not worked up enough to even spend that amount of time?

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The fact of the matter is, based on the submissions that are coming to our office, based on the only two surveys done in Scarborough so far — by the way, at no cost to the taxpayers in one case; at minimal cost because it was attached as part of a mailing that was going out anyway by a Metro councillor — one survey showed 74% of all the members of the chamber of commerce were in support. The other survey to 31,000 households, every household in the councillor's ward, which basically overlaps my riding 100%, showed 83% approval, 83% response, without wasting \$2.5 million.

That's at the root of all of this. As we look for new and innovative ways of delivering services, as we look for ways to put dollars into services and not into bureaucracy, not into politicians' pockets, we're looking to downsize all of those extraneous expenses and put our dollars where they matter the most: into quality education, into policing our streets, into all the services that the people in this province desperately want to see.

I will be voting against this motion. I will be voting against this resolution precisely because of the hypocrisy, precisely because this is nothing more than a way of delaying what should be going on in this chamber right now if they really cared about this bill. If they really cared to bring forward the views of their constituents, they would be standing here today, as they would have stood here on Thursday and Wednesday and Tuesday of last week, and articulating those views. Rather than playing stunts, rather than motions to adjourn and other frivolous procedural filibusters at a cost of \$1,000 a minute in this chamber, we would have genuinely heard what their points of view are.

Instead, this way they get off the hook. All they have to say is: "We don't agree with what the government is doing. We don't have our own opinions on how you save money. We don't have our own opinions on how you can improve service delivery in Metro. We don't have any



opinions on how you can cut bureaucracy and duplication and waste. All we say is that what you're doing is wrong. Don't ask us what the alternative is."

The people of this province repudiated that sort of fence-sitting back on June 8, 1995. I am proud that we have finally had the courage to come forward with this, the final step in the evolution of Metro Toronto, clearly called for in the Common Sense Revolution, clearly part of the mandate our government had when we were elected and formed a majority back in 1995. I'm proud that this is one more commitment we've honoured. I'm proud to support this bill and I am proud that our government will be the first one that guarantees to end the duplication, the overlap, and to chart a course for all of the new city of Toronto that will guarantee its status as a world-class city for decades to come.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to add a few comments to this particular resolution this afternoon, which I intend to support because I believe it's a sensible resolution. It calls together the provincial government and the local municipal governments to craft a question which is mutually accepted: not one which one side believes is important, or the other side, but one where they actually get together and agree upon it. I understand the concern of people on either side of an issue when they feel that perhaps a referendum or a question of some kind can be worded in a specific way to elicit a specific answer. I think this is quite conciliatory. I don't think this is a bulldozing resolution at all.

What I'm hearing from the people of this province is that this government is moving far too quickly and far too drastically and not assessing the consequences of its actions. I suspect many members of the government caucus share that view. However, the government is run from outside the caucus. It's run even from outside the cabinet, because really it is driven by right-wing ideologues who have imposed upon the government their points of view.

When I look at the member for Wellington, and I have watched him over the years in this House, I hardly believe that he would be a disciple of Tom Long and others who have imported their Republican Party ideas from the United States and imposed them. I know his predecessor Jack Johnson, a good friend of mine and a very capable and long-serving member of this Legislature, must shake in his boots when he sees the results of the revolution that is going on from outside the Tory caucus.

Having said that, when a government is making a drastic change of this kind, the onus is on the government to prove that its legislation is in fact good for the people of Metropolitan Toronto or the people of Ontario. I think the advantage of a very extensive debate on this, several days long, and a lot of public hearings and a lot of coverage by the news media is that we can have that kind of canvassing of the issues. If at the end of the day the government view prevails, then it prevails, and in a democracy we accept that.

But I don't think the government has proved its point in this case. There are people out there who believe that bigger is always better and always more efficient. When

you talk to economists who have analysed this carefully, particularly in the municipal field, many of them will tell you that is not the case.

Dr Joseph Kushner of Brock University did a study — it was either for a taxation magazine in Canada or for *Municipal World*; I can't recall which one it was — that clearly demonstrated that there are not economies of scale every time a government proposes that you move from a number of municipalities to one municipality. I think that might well be the case in this instance.

People of other municipalities in Ontario are going to be quite concerned when they see the strength of Metropolitan Toronto, that is, one huge megacity which really has probably the power of a province, because in terms of population it is larger than many of the provinces in this country. But what is concerning me as well is that the government has done this all in the context of sowing confusion out there in the population. Last week they made a plethora of announcements of very complicated matters in this Legislature and outside this Legislature.

If you want to understand what it's all about, the government will now embark upon an advertising campaign paid for by the taxpayers of Ontario. I am looking for all the penny-pinchers on the government benches, those who are so concerned about the unnecessary expenditure of tax dollars, to now go to the Premier, to the Minister of Finance, to the Chairman of Management Board, and say, "We want you to withdraw these ads."

You're going to spend \$650,000 on ads for the Ministry of Health, \$650,000 on ads for the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, \$650,000 for ads for the Ministry of Education and Training, and already \$400,000 on a pamphlet put out even before the bill was introduced, I think, by the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

In years gone by, Mr Eves, my friend from Parry Sound, and Mr Harris, my friend from North Bay, were both individuals who rightfully chastised other governments when they were engaging in what these gentlemen thought were propaganda ads. Clearly, any objective observer who looks at the ads on television, in the newspapers and hears the ones on the radio cannot help but understand that this government is squandering \$2.3 million on self-serving, blatantly partisan Conservative propaganda paid for by the taxpayers of Ontario. Every time one of those ads comes on television during the hockey game, during the news or whenever, taxpayers in this province should be ringing up a cash register, should know that money is being taken out of their pockets to serve the purpose of this government.

This is not only a matter of dollars and cents — that's extremely important — but it's also a matter of fairness. In a democracy, it's important that we have both sides able to present their views in the same fashion. That is why during an election campaign there are limits on the amount of money that can be spent by political parties and individual candidates.

1640

That's good legislation. In fact, I believe that legislation was brought in by the Conservative government of William Davis with the support of the two opposition parties. It's good legislation, but what you see now is unfairness, what you see is the government using — I



might say abusing — its position of power to squander millions of dollars on what can only be characterized as self-serving, partisan government ads.

I think there are many members in the government caucus who probably privately agree with what I've just had to say. Why is the government engaging in it? Well, the ads themselves — I'm as concerned as you must be, Mr Speaker, that the government started out with \$800,000 worth of ads with the Premier in a hockey rink or somewhere, and he's reading from a teleprompter and the teleprompter says how nice things are going to be in Ontario and what a good fellow Mr Harris is and what a good party his party is.

But do you know what I'm afraid of? I'm afraid that the Conservative Party might have — I don't know this to be true — got a good deal on those ads, a better price than usual, because the same or an associated company was doing the other government ads. With the knowledge they were going to be getting all this government business, there would be those out there who would suspect that perhaps the Conservative Party got a better deal. I don't know that to be the case. I think that's worthy of further investigation.

I'm concerned, as I know you are, Mr Speaker, as an individual who represents a constituency, that while all this is going on this government is closing hospitals. On Wednesday night of this week at 7 o'clock at Club Roma in St Catharines, the friends of the Hotel Dieu Hospital will be gathering. Anybody in the community is allowed to go to support Hotel Dieu Hospital, and the people concerned about West Lincoln Memorial Hospital in Grimsby, Douglas Memorial Hospital in Fort Erie, Port Colborne hospital and Niagara-on-the-Lake hospital, all of which will be either closed or radically changed in a proposed report of a commission which based its report on the fact that this government is robbing the people of the Niagara Peninsula of \$44 million in hospital funding.

I'm concerned in the context of what's going on with the megacity bill that that issue in going to be lost in the minds of many in the news media.

I believe that we in the opposition have been reasonable in what we've asked for. Let me be clear about what we have asked for and have not received from the government. I wrote a letter to the Honourable David Johnson, government House leader, which I will read in concluding my remarks today because it represents the position our party has taken on this issue and it represents the position I took at the last House leaders' meeting last Thursday.

"Dear Minister:

"As you are aware from the discussions which took place at the meeting of House leaders on the morning of Thursday, January 16, members of the Liberal caucus have requested that extensive debate and public input be permitted when dealing with Bill 103, the bill dealing with the proposed amalgamation of the six municipalities contained within Metro Toronto into one megacity.

"It is our recommendation that the maximum number of groups, organizations and individuals be heard on this issue during public hearings and that these hearings be held not only within the confines of the legislative precinct at Queen's Park, but also at the municipal

council chambers or a suitable alternative location within each of the municipalities affected — East York, Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough, Toronto and York.

"In addition to this, the Liberal caucus believes that Bill 103 should not proceed to the stage of final consideration until such time as the public consultation initiated by each of these municipalities is completed and the results tabulated.

"The unwillingness of the government to agree to these recommendations last week is of great concern to members of the Liberal caucus.

It is understandable, surely, that the opposition parties are extremely reluctant to proceed with consideration of the bill until these matters have been resolved. It is my hope that you will be able to provide a favourable response to our recommendations at the very earliest opportunity.

"I look forward to hearing from you on these matters today."

It is signed by myself in my capacity as the House leader of the Liberal Party. I think it's a reasonable position, just as I think this particular resolution is reasonable. It's a conciliatory resolution, which will simply have the government of Ontario and the local municipalities within Metropolitan Toronto get together, craft a mutually acceptable question and way of consulting the people so that there are no questions after it's all over.

I believe that should proceed and that the government should not proceed with the final consideration of this legislation until such time as the result of the consultation of those referenda and other ways of consulting have been tabulated and publicized for the people of this province.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** It gives me pleasure today to have a few minutes to speak to this bill. As members may be aware, I spent last week in Newfoundland visiting my father, who has been ill, and I'm happy to say is recovering, and while I was there I tried to keep a close eye on news from Toronto, a little bit hard to get in Newfoundland from time to time. I was able to tune in every other day and get the *Globe*, albeit a bit late, and follow some of the developments in what was dubbed, I believe, as mega-week or mega-announcement week or something like that in Toronto.

**Interjection:** Mega-dump week.

**Ms Churley:** Mega-dump week, exactly. I must say I got depressed and I got very angry, which I still feel. But I want the members opposite to know, the government members, the members of the Harris Conservatives, that I'm more angry than depressed, and particularly members like the member for Scarborough East, whom I listened to closely in his rant about what he called the hypocrisy of the opposition, that what I hear is fear. What I hear is a man, a member of this House who knows that the majority of members ultimately, if not now, are going to support the opposition on this. I believe that he doth protest too much and I'd like to say to the member for Scarborough East and the member for York East — by the way, I'll be going to a meeting in his riding tonight. I've been invited and maybe I'll see him there. As you know, part of East York will become part of my riding in the next election. People who know that phone me from



time to time and if they don't feel represented by their own member they give me a call. I will be attending a meeting here in Toronto as well.

These are citizens' meetings. These are citizens who believe that their own members have blinders on and are not listening to the reality for the taxpayers, the citizens of Metro Toronto. They are not fools. They do not listen to that hogwash, that justification we hear daily from the minister and some of the members from the Metro region, trying to justify why they are doing this to Metro. When I hear members like the member for Scarborough East stand up and say what they're doing here is arranging things, restructuring, so to quote, "Put our dollars into things that matter most to Ontarians, like health care, education etc.," we know what's really going on and so do the citizens of Metro.

We know that this, from day one, had a lot to do with getting more money to put in the coffers of this government's pocket so they can give rich people a tax cut. Unfortunately it all comes around to that. When we see this government desperately looking for ways to find money, we know what it's all about: to put money into the richest people's pockets in our province. We know that's what this is all about.

When members stand up and say, "Oh, we've got all three major newspapers in Toronto supporting us," may I point out to those members that, God knows, the editorial section writers in all three papers, particularly two, the Star and the Globe and Mail, very often differ from columnists and writers within their papers. If they will look closely — I assume they're only reading what they want to read, and that is the editorial positions of those papers — they will see that many knowledgeable, respected journalists are not at all supporting this move, that they have done their research and that they are telling this government, the Harris Tory government, the same thing the opposition and thousands of citizens across Metro are trying to tell them. "We don't believe you," is what they're saying.

1650

From my experience over the last couple of months of going to citizens' meetings and talking to people in my riding and others about this, there are some people who were saying, "Well, megacity, we don't know what it means; maybe it is a good idea if it saves money," and that kind of thing. But these announcements of last week, especially — a good example of what happened is when Mayor Lastman and Alan Tonks, the chair of Metro, finally had to come out and say, "Oh, gee, they betrayed us." They have to come forward and defend and protect and take care of their own constituents. They know they can't get away any more with trying to justify this terrible, anti-democratic move by the Harris Tory government. Everybody seems to know that now except these members.

When I was a minister in the NDP government, sometimes we'd be in difficult situations — I see the member for St Catharines paying attention to this; he has been a cabinet minister too — every now and then somebody, some minister, will come forward with a bright idea to solve a problem and you look at it and think: "Gee, this is really going to hurt my constituents. I don't

think they've done a very good job — the minister and perhaps P and P, the policy and priorities committee — of really researching this and talking about it and finding out how it's really going to affect people."

We had example after example, particularly in Metro Toronto, when our government indeed was looking at a way to restructure the taxation system across Metro because we all knew reforms had to be made. We did have a bill in the House to make some changes, but those of us from Metro — and I see my colleague the member for Dovercourt, who was a minister in that same government, and myself and the member for Beaches-Woodbine and the member for Fort York. We're all here now —

**Mr Bradley:** Ah, the good old days.

**Ms Churley:** "Ah, the good old days," says the member for St Catharines. Yes, those were the good old days, because at least we would go out and speak to people. We fought. When we found out that moves that could be passed by our government were actually going to hurt our constituents and down the road weren't even going to really solve the problem, we went out and we had massive public hearings. We went out and we did our research and we were able to come back, having done our homework, and say, "This is wrong," and prove to our own government members and the minister responsible that it was the wrong thing to do. We defended and worked with and helped our constituents, which is what we're here to do.

I would say to the members from the Metro area today, particularly the backbenchers, to listen to what we're saying and to listen to what their constituents are saying, not to what Mike Harris is saying and not to — I don't know what is going through the head of the Minister for Municipal Affairs. I just don't know what he's thinking, because there is no evidence that any of this stuff is going to work. On the contrary, the evidence says it isn't going to work.

We have a situation here now in Toronto, in my riding of Riverdale, where my constituents are scared to death that their municipal taxes are going to go way up — and we know they are, all the studies show they are — and their public services are going to decline, poor people are going to be poorer, and yes, the rich will get richer and they won't have to worry about these things.

I say shame on this government. Shame on the members from the Metro area who are not listening to the people from my constituency and their constituency. I would urge them today, if they have true common sense and they are truly representing their constituents, to stop making excuses: "Oh, it's hypocrisy over there. Why should we do that? There used to be all of these things, and they say one thing and mean something else."

They are the government now and people are not believing what they're saying. They are not fools. I recommend to them today to stand up, be real men — I guess there are a few women around here today too — support your constituents and support this resolution today. They laugh, but we'll see who laughs last on this one.

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale):** Mr Speaker, thank you very much for your brief indulgence. I would like to make some specific comments about Bill 103 and



the proposed resolution by the third-party opposition leader about referenda today, and to point out some of the refrains we have heard in the past few months and over the last year from the opposition benches when it comes to the question, where are the jobs? That was their refrain last spring and last winter: Where are the jobs?

We know, ladies and gentlemen, that the jobs are inherent in this particular proposal, Bill 103. How? Let's start with the whole property tax issue in Metropolitan Toronto when it comes to its complete non-competitiveness vis-à-vis other international cities throughout the world. Statistics Canada studies over the years have shown that in terms of the property tax proportion of gross national product, Canada is the world leader in the highest property tax: 4.1% of GNP is related to the high property taxes, going right down to Germany at 1.1%. Even the United States only has a GNP of 3.3%.

How does this link to job creation? It's quite evident that when you look at the assessment base in Metropolitan Toronto and you understand how taxes are distributed across the various Metro municipalities, to use a cliché, it does not take a rocket scientist to understand that generally in the suburban cities we have been paying higher taxes for many years — the last 30 at least — substantially higher taxes than the folks in the city of Toronto. Now the cat has come home to get its bell on. As part of the whole package of restructuring, we have proposed through the finance ministry and this government that we are going to go to a fair, actual value property assessment system. And what do we hear from the opposition benches? "Oh, everything's fine. The folks in the suburban cities can continue to pay the higher taxes and end up having fewer services."

We've heard from across the way that the whole thing will end up in higher taxes completely. Well, anybody who has taken a degree in anything would know there are statistical variations, and that is going to be evident in the outcome when we go to the new property assessment system in January 1998.

For starters, we need to get our property assessment system in greater balance than it is now so we will have greater opportunity to create some jobs in this province. When I say "we," I'm referring to the private sector. We can create a climate for creating jobs. Government usually does not directly create jobs except for those it hires for specific governmental functions.

Another reason for the whole referenda debate being proposed by the leader of the third party is that they believe this is a question on which you can pose a fair question and that we can work together. But in point of fact, the members of both opposition parties, particularly the Liberals, have done nothing but a classic filibuster when it comes to the issue of deciding how we would establish a referenda bill and what kinds of concepts and problems and topics would be fairminded questions under that proposed legislation. In fact, prior to December 1996, the member for Windsor-Sandwich, Ms Pupatello, did a two-hour filibuster in the Legislative Assembly committee denouncing the use of referenda whatsoever, and used California as the prime example of how dreadful they are, how evil they are, and imputed motives to the members of this government for even proposing the possibility of

having referenda legislation. Furthermore, the Deputy Speaker, M. Morin, had proposed that we could look at referenda if we had a three-party caucus representation commission, or some such name, where any question would have to have unanimity. Yet when it came to going into details of the implementation of such legislation, we ended up with a two-hour rant by the member opposite.

1700

Isn't it strange, when he talks in the Legislative Assembly about how great referenda are, when we look at the member for Oakwood, who was demanding that we have an amalgamation when he was his other self back in 1983? I have here a photocopied brochure from the 1982 election, in which the honourable member for Oakwood pointed out, "Amalgamation: A solution that deserves serious consideration. Is York a politicians' luxury we cannot afford? We have the highest taxes in Metro but shoddy services and few community facilities," and went on to propose that this was a possibility, a good concept to look at.

What happened between 1982, or 1980 when he was the chairman of Reform York, and 1997? What created the 360-degree inversion in terms of whether we should have a referendum? Back then amalgamation was a good idea and yet today amalgamation is the worst idea you can come across and it ends up that he wants to have a referendum on the question. Absolutely incredible, but true to where that particular party stands on the whole issue of new legislation.

I would like to add further to the debate in terms of the theme that democracy is being destroyed by not holding a referendum on Bill 103. Aside from whether you could even come up with two sides to ascertain what the question would be, have the parameters of what the debate would be and get on with posting how you'd implement and carry out the question, we have here the destruction of democracy in that context. I would like the ask the members of the public, and the members of the opposition particularly, when you have nine economic development departments, or six legal departments, or seven planning departments, do you have greater democracy?

It would appear so, because the members opposite opposed thoroughly the Fewer Politicians Act when this government had the courage to reduce the number of politicians from 130 down to 103. Now they are again back on the same theme in terms of saying that would be undemocratic, but in point of fact none of them has very much of an optimistic nature over there, would look at the possibilities in terms of what would be the advantages and benefits of a new, unified city in terms of even democratic representation.

To be specific, you would have 44 councillors and one mayor elected at large right across Metro. The present representation by population within Metropolitan Toronto by Metro government itself, by the Metro Toronto councillors, is approximately between 75,000 and 90,000, yet in the new, unified city we would have two councillors, not one, whose population ranges in terms of representation would be, at the lowest, between 48,700 and about 55,780. That would be the population range.



Furthermore, when you look at the significant built-in advantages of having a new mayor from a new, unified, amalgamated city, as I'm sure the member for Oakwood must have been thinking back even in the days of 1983 when he first ran for public office, what are the strategic advantages of having a mayor speak for 2.5 million citizens Metro-wide? It's pretty obvious. That mayor, however he or she gets elected, or if the costs are somewhat too high we end up with an acclamation, will have tremendous authority and influence to speak for the citizens of Metropolitan Toronto in terms of whether Metro government and the people of Metropolitan Toronto are getting as much from the provincial government as the rest of Ontario. I think it will provide significant leverage in negotiations on practically any of the issues that are raised by the members opposite.

Finally, I would like to add that the final theme of Bill 103 that comes through very clearly, if you read the thing in its entirety, is accountability. Back when Municipal Affairs Minister John Eakins in the Peterson government of 1988 proposed, when the new Metro came into being, whereby the major principle of that legislation was direct election of Metro councillors to Metro government — he said at the time that there would be greater public accountability to the electorate.

Case in point: In January-February 1989, when I first got elected to Etobicoke city council, lo and behold, what was the first issue the new Metro, supposedly truly accountable group of people down there, brought forward on the agenda? Not job creation, not the management of strategic reserves. No, no, none of that. They sent a resolution to all the local councils of the day demanding that they get their proportion of tax dollars for Metro even before the taxes had been levied in February 1989. In other words, "Just give us the money so we can get on with what we have to do." Is that accountability? In point of fact, on the direct election of Metro council, even Liberals today and members of the NDP have said to me, "It wasn't a great idea," because what it did to accountability was to diffuse it, so much that nobody becomes truly accountable.

The tax levy fiasco of January and February 1989 clearly points out why this government is eliminating Metro. That was its first priority at that time, and we had to end up going to court to protect the right of the local municipality to collect the taxes, because there was a great dispute over who was going to get the interest and who was going to spend the money.

Today Bill 103 clearly shows where there will be direct accountability in a fiscal sense. There will be one set of councillors elected — nobody else, only them, whoever they are — in the two districts of the 22 provincial-federal proposed new ridings. They will be responsible for how money is spent, how taxing decisions are made. Those are the primary rationales for Bill 103. There are many, many others I could go into, but I think this highlights and outlines why people are interested in getting on with the job of having a true, unified city that speaks together as one voice, internationally, nationally and locally, and from that perspective we will all be the winners.

1710

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** I'm pleased to join the debate on the motion brought by the third party. Let me begin my short few minutes. The real debate is not the entirety of Bill 103, what it does and what it doesn't do; it is with respect to whether we should have the possibility of presenting the opportunity to the people to have their say. It's got to do with the referendum call, it's got to do with democracy; the real thing, real democracy, not the one I keep on hearing from the side of the government.

Many years ago one of the major newspapers here in Toronto did write that democracy is alive and well and working only when the governing majority gives the minority an opportunity to be heard. Under this government the minority is not getting their voice to be heard.

All afternoon I have heard from the government side nothing with respect to what Bill 103 and the megacity are going to be doing to Metro Toronto people. I haven't heard anything with respect to taxes, to seniors issues or kids and so forth.

When I hear members of the opposition side, especially for Scarborough East and Scarborough Centre, saying, "This is our commitment and this is our mandate," let me say what their leader, their Premier has been telling the people of Ontario over the years. Let me read just a couple of paragraphs, because I think it is important for the members of the government side and for the people out there to hear this. This comes from a document that I am going to carry as long as I sit in this House. It is entitled *Your Ontario, Your Choice*. I say to the people on the government side that if you really meant what you told the people of Ontario, if your leader, Mr Harris, meant it and was truthful and honest when he got this document in front of us, then go ahead and read it and give the people a choice; give the people a chance to choose. This is what Mr Harris says:

"So must the question of responsibility. Some have negatively suggested that the referendum mechanism is an abrogation of a government's responsibility to govern. This Ontario government believes otherwise. Our concept of governing arises from a strong belief in individual choice" — he speaks of individual choice — "collective stewardship, and distributed responsibility for the future. In other words, we believe that individuals should decide their futures. In turn, the function of government should be to serve and facilitate those aspirations, not to rule or constrain them. Referenda are but one way of putting taxpayers back in control of their government."

This was not the opposition; this was Mr Harris. This wasn't prior to the election either; this was back in August 1996. I am calling on the backbenchers over there, I am calling on Mr Harris now and saying, this is your document. This is what you have said with respect to referenda. This is what you have said in going to the people. This is what you have said about giving the people a choice to decide for themselves, giving the people a voice.

What we have here today, what we are debating today, is nothing less than what Mr Harris has been saying all along, so I would hope that indeed the government side



will see what Mr Harris has been saying all along with respect to going to the people and the democratic process.

This is only a smokescreen. The members of the government side should not be saying, "How are we going to do it? It's too complicated," and stuff like that. I think they should be addressing themselves with respect to kids in Metro, to seniors waiting to get into old-age homes, nursing homes, day cares and so forth. That's the real issue. They should be concerned and they should be speaking more about taxes going up. They should address the issue that services will go down. Those are the real issues.

I don't think I have heard one member on the government side addressing the fact that one out of three kids in Metro lives in poverty. They don't want to hear that. Now it becomes the responsibility of the local municipality. What are we going to do now that we have this information, now that we have these figures? Are we going to wait until after January 1998, when the government is going to dump the responsibility on the local municipality to look after one third of the kids in Metro living in poverty? Are we going to wait until January 1, 1998, to find more beds in nursing homes so people don't have to lie in hospital corridors and be charged on top of that? Is this what the government is telling us, that now it's no longer their responsibility and that we will have to wait until the transition takes place? This is the real issue.

The real issue is not what they have been telling the people of Ontario. They have not been clear, they have not been upfront and they have not been telling the truth, if I may. The truth is what the papers have been printing in the last week. The truth is what this government has been dumping on the people of Ontario in the past week, and it amounts to millions and millions of dollars.

The government members on the other side and the Premier have been saying that there is one taxpayer. You know what's really sad, to the members on the government side? We have a government that has got the guts to tell the seniors of Ontario, "When your taxes are going to go up on the house that you spent your life paying for, if you can't afford the increases, go ahead and put on a negative mortgage."

You know, Mr Speaker — and I'm going to finish my comments because my time is running out — it is very sad. It's very sad indeed when we have a callous government and when we have a Premier who doesn't give a damn about kids starving in the city of Toronto. He doesn't give a damn about the seniors in Toronto here, those seniors who don't have RRSPs, who don't have executive pension plans. I'm talking about those seniors who built this place here, who built our schools, our roads and our hospitals, those seniors who are barely making it on their own today, and we are telling those seniors: "That's too bad." If they can't afford the tax increase which they're going to be getting, "Put a negative mortgage on the house."

I'm delighted to support this motion brought forward by the third party and I hope the House will do the same.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** I'm glad to have a few minutes at least to speak on this motion, which is actually, when you look at it, a very simple, straightforward, and I would say even relatively mild proposal that we are

putting forward. We are asking in this motion that the government members agree that the Minister of Municipal Affairs sit down with the mayors, put together a referendum question that's acceptable to him and to the mayors, and then abide by that referendum question on the issue of amalgamation of the six different municipalities in Metropolitan Toronto into one large megacity.

We are doing that because we believe it's fundamental that people in Metropolitan Toronto have an opportunity to express their democratic right on this important question. We particularly feel that's essential when, in this instance, what the Harris government is doing is completely opposite to what they promised prior to the last election they would do.

Here is a Premier who runs around the province proudly proclaiming that he's the man who keeps his promises, and on this important issue he is doing exactly the opposite of what he said prior to the last election he would do. He said in the Toronto Star debate on the greater Toronto area that he would abolish Metropolitan Toronto and would keep the lower-tier municipalities; he is doing the opposite. So there is no mandate that this government has on this important issue and people are justifiably upset about the lack of democratic process that this government is using to try to ram through this legislation.

We see those actions continuing to the point where we have the minister standing up and mocking municipalities in Metropolitan Toronto because they are taking advantage of the rules that he himself only a few weeks ago proudly proclaimed in Bill 86 that allow for referenda and votes to be taken in ways other than the traditional way of voting; in other words, by using the phone-in ballot, by using the mail-in ballot, by using those particular methods as alternatives to the traditional way of voting. What this government is not realizing is that in mocking what the municipalities are doing, they are mocking the people of Metropolitan Toronto, because if ever there was an issue on which people are beginning to rise, this is it. This is it because people are understanding that the democratic rights they have are being trampled on and because they also see that behind Bill 103 is the rest of the Tory agenda, the rest of the Mike Harris agenda that we've seen unfold in spades in this last week, which is all about downloading on to the property tax base billions of dollars that at the end of the day will result in property taxes picking up a larger and larger chunk of costs and will result, more importantly, in the average family — not just in Metropolitan Toronto but across the province — paying more for health care, paying more for long-term care, paying more for basic services. The only ones who are going to be better off at the end of the day are Mike Harris's rich friends who will indeed benefit from the tax cut.

That's what the story is about, that's what people are realizing more and more is happening and that's why this government is afraid of having a referendum on Bill 103. They know they would lose it and they're not prepared to be bound by that.

1720

**Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South):** It is my pleasure to participate for a few short minutes in the



debate concerning this resolution. I want to confine my remarks, if I may, unless prompted by my friendly members opposite, to the actual intent of the opposition day motion which I have to say is making a number of assumptions that we on this side of the House are having difficulty agreeing with.

It is quite true, of course, that we introduced Bill 103 and we intend, as the members of both sides of the House are aware, to have full public hearings with respect to Bill 103 in order to gain some added advice from the public at large, and undoubtedly from some of the politicians who are affected by this in Metropolitan Toronto and hopefully from some of the taxpayers and citizens and consumers of services within Metropolitan Toronto.

The second paragraph goes on to say that the "municipalities within Metropolitan Toronto have decided to conduct a public referendum on the province's legislation." This is where we, I believe, on this side of the House have some difficulty with the wording as proposed by the third party.

A referendum is a very special thing. A referendum refers, both in law and in practice, to public participation in a voting process on a particular question, which process is binding. We all know that under Bill 86, as members opposite have indicated, municipalities have the ability and the right, and in some cases, I would argue, the obligation, to pursue canvassing of the public through what can best be described as a plebiscite. The difference between a plebiscite and a referendum is like the distance between either shore of the Red Sea, in that a plebiscite is non-binding and a referendum is binding.

I applaud those citizens within Metropolitan Toronto who wish to have some sort of say in their future. I applaud that. I do not applaud the activities of the mayors within Metropolitan Toronto who are using the term "referendum" for something that could best be described as a plebiscite and at worst a public opinion poll of dubious merit.

I say that not lightly, and there's a bit of tragedy involved here, because I believe that people are unfortunately being misled, not by anyone in this House, certainly, but by the tale of events that have occurred within Metropolitan Toronto.

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** Are you for referenda?

**Mr Clement:** The member asks an important question: Am I for referendums? I am 110%, unequivocally in favour of binding referendums for the future of this province. Unfortunately what we have happening in Metropolitan Toronto is not a referendum. It does not have the tools available to it to make it a referendum. It does not have the safeguards to ensure a democratic result that binding referendums of necessity must have.

Mr Speaker, as you're aware, at the Legislative Assembly committee of this chamber I have been proposing a series of moves that would allow and commit the government and this Legislature to an umbrella piece of legislation that would commit the province of Ontario to binding referendums in certain cases.

What's happening in Metropolitan Toronto, if I may say parenthetically, is a walking advertisement for the need for umbrella legislation, to ensure that binding

referendums occur within a framework that makes them fair, reasonable, democratic, open and honest. Unfortunately, those criteria have not been met in the instant case within Metropolitan Toronto.

We suggest the following: There may be two avenues to pursue to allow a binding referendum to take place. One is where the government thinks an issue is of such importance that it should go to a binding referendum. The government has the right, though, to say, "Look, this is a logical extension of our agenda that we were elected to do as a result of the last election," and they have the right to move forward on pieces of legislation that they feel are in the best interests of Ontario and are totally consistent with the agenda they were elected to do.

However, the government might be wrong or the opposition parties might be wrong. That might be the considered opinion of the citizens of Ontario, that we have got it wrong that in a particular case a referendum should not be the rule. That is where citizen initiatives come into play, where the people of Ontario say to the political elites, say to the government and indeed might say to the opposition parties: "You have got it wrong. We think this is an issue of such public importance that a referendum is necessary." We have proposed that would occur when 10% of the citizenry sign a petition within 180 days of its start, and under those circumstances, a binding referendum would occur at the next reasonable opportunity.

There are other things we have suggested: a fair referendum commission that would (1) vet the question, and (2) ensure that the administration of the referendum was fair, open and honest.

Let's start to view the situation we face in Metropolitan Toronto right now as opposed to the suggestions the government and I as a member of the government are pursuing on behalf of our agenda to have binding referendums as the norm in Ontario.

We have, in the case of our proposals, a way to ensure that the question is fair versus what we have going on in the six cities within Metropolitan Toronto where a skewed question is being pursued by six mayors who have decided what the question is going to be. We have a fair administration that we are proposing by the government of Ontario, that would be done independently of the government of Ontario by a fair referendum commission versus the cities administering the referendum in the case of Metropolitan Toronto, the cities deciding how the ballots are going to be allocated, the cities deciding how they are going to be counted, the cities deciding how they are going to be accounted for.

We have what I would suggest to be a fair discussion of the issues by virtue of the role of the referendum commission we are proposing versus the cities not only setting the question, but funding one side of the question, the city of Toronto being the most egregious in this respect, where we not only have \$955,000 being spent for the actual poll, including staff costs, but \$450,000 being spent on a Metro-wide public information campaign — goodness knows what sort of information they're going to get on that — plus ward anti-amalgamation campaign funds allocated to each councillor, not some independent commission but each city councillor, to the tune of



\$200,000. And if that wasn't enough, they're spending another \$20,000 being allocated to a group, so-called Taxpayers Against Megacity. That's just one example. I acknowledged the most egregious one, but the trend is there for the others to follow.

That to me does not lend itself to a proper question nor a legitimate answer. It might be good enough for a public opinion poll or some form of testing of the waters — I applaud the cities for doing that — but not to make it a binding referendum where the legitimacy is there, the credibility is there and a fair, open and honest process is there. Those are the differences between what the government wants to see in terms of binding referendums and the tragedy that is occurring within Metropolitan Toronto when it comes to this ersatz, this zirconium referendum procedure that they are following.

From our perspective, we would love to get to the stage where direct democracy is the order of the day, and we look forward to this House and this Legislature debating direct democracy so that it can occur not only in Metropolitan Toronto but in the province as a whole. But you are not getting direct democracy either through this resolution or as a result of the campaign that is being waged by the six mayors in their own offices, so-called on behalf of the citizens of Metropolitan Toronto but, really, who can tell?

1730

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** I am very delighted to be able to speak in this debate today and to support the resolution as put forward, because I believe that what this government fails to realize is that they are undermining, and truly I believe they are undermining, the kind of traditions, the kind of structures and the kind of democracy that have evolved in our province.

I lament these days in which critics of the government and those who oppose what the government has done are being described as nothing more than wasters of taxpayers' dollars, as though they were intentionally following that route. Any dissenting voice to this government's agenda is relegated to nothing more than simply waste, refuse, to be thrown away. The dissenting voices, those voices that have criticism of this government, can be described by those who support the government as such as though they were wasting taxpayers' money.

I lament this attitude, because we've come to the point where to criticize the government means you are wasting taxpayers' dollars. When that begins to occur in a democracy, you can justify any action that is undertaken by any government and avoid any kind of dissenting voice, avoid any kind of public scrutiny, any kind of real, democratic debate that should be held by the public at large.

That is the essence of what we're dealing with, because ultimately this resolution and the resolution I put forward in private members' hour calling on the government to uphold the results of referenda or plebiscites that have been held in Metro Toronto to deal with the question of amalgamation are calling on the government to recognize that there may be in fact — and it may be a minority opinion; it may very well turn out to be a minority opinion — but none the less an opinion and an expression of interest that ought to be heard, because that

is the essence of our democracy: allowing for dissenting voices to have their fullest expression.

This government has not found the time to allow for those dissenting voices to be heard. Ultimately what's being called for here is an expression of that dissent to be recognized publicly. Referenda may not be the best way to do this, but what choice do people have when this government tries to shut down the opposition, tries to silence the critics of the government?

Time and time again this government has shown its true character. It didn't just start yesterday or with the introduction of this megacity bill; it started with the introduction of the omnibus legislation, Bill 26.

I have to remind members of this chamber that had it not been the for the opposition using extreme measures and tactics — and yes, they were extreme — which I believe were called for, we would not have had a fuller debate in this assembly around a very important piece of legislation. Again, we see the same thing happening today and during this special session which has been brought to us to deal with the matters surrounding amalgamation and, furthermore, the enormous, fundamental changes that are being put forward by this government in mega-week, altering the very fabric of our society as we know it, altering the very fundamental institutions that sustain our society.

Who's going to get it in the nose? It will be Metropolitan Toronto, which ultimately will pay a huge price. I know the Speaker, whose riding is part of Metro Toronto, would agree with me. Not to make him more partisan, but he is a Metro Toronto member, I'll speak on his behalf. Indeed, Metro Toronto taxpayers, property taxpayers, will feel enormous pain and the wrath of this government. I lament that indeed the democracy that I have come to love, that I know every member of this Legislative Assembly would uphold, is being undermined.

Metropolitan Toronto is being sacrificed. I think there is a great resentment on the part of the government towards the way this city has evolved, the life of this city, the structures that have been put in place that allow for dissent, that allow for an expression of criticism, that allow for citizens' groups to come together collectively to make decisions. This government doesn't like that, doesn't like dissent, doesn't like contrary opinion. It wants to ram through its legislation time and time again and avoid the dissenting opinions. What we're seeing is that the barbarians truly are at the gates of our democracy, and I lament that.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** I am pleased to join this debate and in particular to talk about the very essence of this motion that's before us today, and that is simply a request that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing meet with the different mayors of the six area municipalities to draft a referendum question which fairly and accurately describes the government's proposal for the amalgamated city. Nothing could be simpler than that.

We've heard an awful lot of debate here today, particularly from the government side, which seems to indicate that, number one, they're in favour of a referendum. Mr Clement has talked about referendum legislation with the Legislative Assembly committee on a number of



occasions, urging the other members of that committee to endorse the concept of holding referendums.

This is a perfect opportunity for that to actually take place, on an issue which is clear-cut and focused: Should there be one Toronto, a metropolitan municipality of 2.3 million people, or should we, in effect, have six autonomous cities in this area? I can't for the life of me understand why the government members would be opposed to this kind of question being raised, a request that the Minister of Municipal Affairs meet with the mayors so that the best possible question, which would be as simple and straightforward as possible, can be determined, especially since it is obviously in all of our interests that whatever question is asked be clear-cut, be direct, be fair, so that whatever opinion is expressed by the people on this issue will be forthright and straightforward and so that there can be no doubt as to where the people in this metropolitan area of 2.3 million people stand on this issue.

Quite frankly, I thought the question was very wisely put, because it was not made completely into a partisan issue by one party or another. It asked in effect that an opposition party get together with the ministry in charge to draft the appropriate question in order to legitimize what's been happening in these six different municipalities.

We all know that Toronto is the lifeline of this province, and I would strongly suggest to the government members that they support this more-than-reasonable solution.

740

**Mr Hampton:** This is an important debate and it concerns some important issues. Let me start off by saying that the government's whole process around this has been awful, awful because if you go back to the 1995 election campaign, the Premier, in several questionnaires he filled out, said that he and his party did not favour large urban governments. In fact, he said that he and his party favoured strengthening local government. At the debate that was held on the GTA region, the now Premier even said at the time that he favoured doing away with Metro-style government and he favoured strengthening the local municipalities within Metropolitan Toronto.

So now the government comes forward this fall and tries to dissociate itself totally from what it said in the past. But not wanting to be confronted with what it has said in the past, not wanting to be confronted with the fact that there has been a total change in direction and, I might add, some deception, the government wants to ram it all through, ram it all through and hope no one notices.

The government doesn't want to hear from local municipalities, doesn't want to hear from the citizens of Metropolitan Toronto, doesn't want to engage in any argument or debate about what needs to be done. The fact of the matter is, and I think people across Metropolitan Toronto know this, there are legitimate issues of governance and administration in Toronto and the GTA, but what the government is proposing here does not deal with any of those.

Let me give you an example of why we're opposing this whole megacity concept and let me spell out what I think the direction ought to be. A megacity will be

undemocratic. It will be profoundly undemocratic. It will be friendly to developers and it will be friendly to the corporate interests, but not to neighbourhoods. A megacity is too big to handle local planning. Councillors covering a city of over two million people won't know anything about most of the neighbourhood changes they're voting on. Toronto got its reputation as a livable city by listening to neighbourhoods and protecting them. This scheme is custom-made for the interests of developers and for the interests of corporations.

The megacity will be so large that big infrastructure questions will dominate the agenda. Neighbourhood issues will get short shrift. As I said, this megacity concept will be good for developers. It will be bad for neighbourhoods, bad for communities and bad for the citizens of Toronto.

The government tries to cloud the issue by saying that there will be community councils made up of councillors from areas approximating the old cities. The government backgrounder says these councils may even get some limited planning authority, but absolutely none of this is in the legislation; all of this to be accepted on faith. But when you look a little further on "accepted on faith," we know that the official plan amendments which are needed for most significant development decisions will remain with this large megacity council, a megacity council that will be largely financed and backed by those developers and corporations which hope to profit by and hope to take advantage of this whole scheme. This will be profoundly undemocratic.

The government says, "This will save money." All the government offers up to back up that suggestion is a very flimsy KPMG study that said that amalgamation might find \$300 million a year. This study was done in three weeks and the consultants were not even allowed to talk to anyone who actually delivers services in a municipality.

Most of these so-called savings that the government talks about were actually based on changes that have nothing to do with amalgamation. For example, large savings were calculated in policing, a service that's already amalgamating. Many of the so-called savings are based on new management practices that include such things as contracting out of sewage services, contracting out of computer operations, all of which involve big issues of privacy and confidentiality, things where before anyone talks about them, there at least ought to be some study and consultation to see if there's any truth in them.

The government wants to ignore the fact that where megacity has been forced before, such as, for example, Halifax-Dartmouth and the surrounding areas, the costs actually went up. The government wants to ignore American experts like Wendell Cox and University of Western Ontario professor Andrew Sancton, both of whom have studied megacity amalgamations and both of whom say that in almost every case it has cost more. In fact, Professor Sancton points out that either service levels will harmonize upwards to the highest level, thereby increasing costs, or some municipalities will see service standards decline.

We believe that's what will happen here. A larger structure means more middle management, which trans-



lates into government by nameless, faceless bureaucrats — not responsible government, not representative government. In fact, if you look at where megacity has been tried in the past, megacity usually means megabureaucracy, meaning mega-taxes. We believe that is exactly what will happen here.

Then there's the whole issue of downloading, because part of what's happening in the background is that this government wants to force down the costs of health care, force down the costs of transportation, force down the costs of policing, force down the costs of social assistance. When you add that into the equation, it certainly means mega-taxes.

So we're opposed to what the government is proposing here because we believe it doesn't answer any of the salient questions. There are salient questions, though, that need to be looked at. For example, both the Golden report and the government's own process, the Crombie panel, pointed out that there needs to be coordination of transportation and coordination of sewer and water services across the greater Toronto area. This will not address any of those. In fact, both of those reports alluded to the fact that \$1 billion could be saved in terms of greater coordination of sewer and water services, transportation services and attention to economic growth across the greater Toronto area, but this government wants to ignore that. A legitimate issue of governance and administration, and this government wants to ignore it.

The government should deal with urban sprawl, which is one of the greatest costs that's hitting us. Urban sprawl should be dealt with as both an environmental issue and an efficiency issue. Again, the Golden task force pointed out that there would be a lot of savings if this were addressed. Instead of doing that, this government has, by its other measures, worsened urban sprawl, created a greater problem in terms of urban sprawl, things that will add to municipal taxes in the future.

We need democratic, accountable local government. In fact, planning consultant Ken Greenberg gave one example of why in a November 23 *Globe and Mail* article:

"For local planning decisions which have so much impact on the look and feel of a city, you need municipal councillors who have personal knowledge of the urban spaces in question. You won't have that. You can't have that if councillors are representing a huge, sprawling metropolis of over two million people."

Further, we need efficiency and we believe there are ways to create efficiency, but this government wants to race ahead without any serious study of how you create efficiencies. Local municipalities should be looking at ways to better coordinate services, or in some cases amalgamate the services. The minister has never even considered whether this could be done while still preserving the right of people to their own local government, to responsible government, to democratic government. He is again relying on a KPMG study where the consultants weren't even allowed to talk to the people who actually deliver the services. I could go on.

Support for amalgamation of services, where this is proven through comprehensive studies, is something that needs to be looked at. I would even argue that the gov-

ernment should be promoting, in some cases, the amalgamation of municipalities where they are interested in that and where they think it will be in the interests of their citizens. For example, the city of York is looking at this, but the government doesn't promote this. No, they've got their megacity scheme that they want to promote. He won't meet with the mayors to even talk about the issue.

Because all these legitimate issues are being ignored, because the government is more interested in forcing the downloading of health care services, the downloading of transportation services, the downloading of policing, the downloading of social assistance, because this government is more interested in creating a governing structure that will be great for developers and wonderful for corporate interests but awful for democracy and awful for neighbourhoods and awful for communities, we have no choice but to put forward this resolution and say to the government and to people: Allow some democratic decision-making, allow some democratic input.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Mr Hampton has moved opposition day number 1. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members; it's a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1753 to 1758.*

**The Speaker:** Mr Hampton has moved opposition day number 1. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Boyd, Marion	Grandmaître, Bernard	Martel, Shelley
Bradley, James J.	Gravelle, Michael	Martin, Tony
Brown, Michael A.	Hampton, Howard	McGuinty, Dalton
Churley, Marilyn	Hoy, Pat	Miclash, Frank
Colle, Mike	Kennedy, Gerard	Patten, Richard
Cooke, David S.	Kormos, Peter	Pouliot, Gilles
Cordiano, Joseph	Kwinter, Monte	Pupatello, Sandra
Crozier, Bruce	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario
Curling, Alvin	Lankin, Frances	Silipo, Tony
Duncan, Dwight	Laughren, Floyd	Wildman, Bud
Gerretsen, John	Marchese, Rosario	Wood, Len

**The Speaker:** All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Arnott, Ted	Galt, Doug	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Baird, John R.	Gilchrist, Steve	Ross, Lillian
Barrett, Toby	Grimmett, Bill	Runciman, Robert W.
Bassett, Isabel	Guzzo, Garry J.	Shea, Derwyn
Beaubien, Marcel	Hastings, John	Sheehan, Frank
Boushy, Dave	Johns, Helen	Skarica, Toni
Brown, Jim	Johnson, Bert	Smith, Bruce
Carroll, Jack	Jordan, W. Leo	Spina, Joseph
Chudleigh, Ted	Kells, Morley	Stewart, R. Gary
Clement, Tony	Leach, Al	Tascona, Joseph N.
Cunningham, Dianne	Leadston, Gary L.	Tilson, David
Danford, Harry	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tsubouchi, David H.
DeFaria, Carl	Munro, Julia	Turnbull, David
Doyle, Ed	Murdoch, Bill	Vankoughnet, Bill

Elliott, Brenda  
Fisher, Barbara  
Flaherty, Jim  
Ford, Douglas B.  
Fox, Gary  
Froese, Tom

Mushinski, Marilyn  
Newman, Dan  
O'Toole, John  
Parker, John L.  
Pettit, Trevor  
Preston, Peter

Villeneuve, Noble  
Wettlaufer, Wayne  
Wood, Bob  
Young, Terence H.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 33, the nays are 58.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

It now being past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1801.*



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Tuesday 21 January 1997

Mardi 21 janvier 1997



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 21 January 1997

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 21 janvier 1997

*The House met at 1331.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### GOLDCORP LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** My statement today is directed to the Minister of Labour. Minister, for months I have been asking you to personally intervene in the eight-month strike at the Goldcorp mine in Balmertown.

This strike, as you're aware, is just one in a series of strikes throughout the province that has seen management run roughshod over hardworking and dedicated men and women with your government's blessing.

My municipal colleagues and I are very concerned that this strike will have a long-term effect on families, the community and, more importantly, the children of these workers.

Let me read from an article which appeared in our local media just before the Christmas break: "Social issue discussions in Linda Aucoin's grade 4-5 class are taking on a new light — many of the students have parents on strike. They know the issues, they know strikes really hurt everybody." Ms Aucoin went on to state that she and her colleagues see "children come to school cold and hungry, their lunches as obscure sometimes as a tomato."

Workers and their families want to know when the Minister of Labour will finally intervene in this situation and use her office to bring an end to this strike.

It is clear to everyone concerned that this minister does not understand the seriousness of the situation. Like my constituents who work at Goldcorp, I am outraged that you would allow Goldcorp to continue this strike while children are going to school cold and hungry and the community is suffering. These workers would prefer to be working and they are outraged at your lack of concern for them and their families.

Obviously, workers' rights are not a priority with this minister.

### ABORIGINAL RIGHTS

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** Today I want to make a statement on aboriginal rights. I'd like to direct my statement to the Minister of Natural Resources and the minister responsible for native affairs.

I want to make this government fully aware of a very serious situation that has been developing since November 1996 in my riding of Cochrane North. The Constance Lake First Nation has complained that their aboriginal and treaty rights are being infringed upon by the Minister of Natural Resources and a lumber company within their

own reserve. A few months ago, a member of the first nation was told to remove his traps on reserve land because the company wanted to start logging in the area. The first nation doesn't object to forestry activities, but will object to any infringement of their rights.

The MNR is responsible for issuing licences for harvesting wood. Your government must therefore play an active role in resolving this dispute as soon as possible. If this situation is allowed to escalate further, nobody will win.

The economic development and stability of the area depend on a resolution of this conflict. That's why I urge you today to stay on top of this highly sensitive situation and to pay attention to a letter that was sent from Chief Raymond Ferris of the Constance Lake First Nation, along with the national chief, Ovide Mercredi, as well as the grand chief, Charles D. Fox.

They are very much concerned about this situation. They don't want it to develop into another situation like happened at Ipperwash, and I'm asking both ministers to stay on top of this situation now.

### HUGHES ELCAN

**Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** Last week I had the pleasure of participating in a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the opening of a new expansion at Hughes Elcan Optical Technology, which is a major employer in my riding.

Hughes Elcan is a definite business success story that is helping to put central Ontario on the global marketplace map.

This 55,000-square-foot expansion is needed in order to meet the demand for projected growth in the near future. Presently Elcan has approximately 625 personnel, and it is anticipated that by the year 2000 the company will employ approximately 1,000 and increase its sales from \$106 million to over \$150 million.

Hughes Elcan is a major exporter and world leader in the design, development and manufacture of high-precision optics, opto-mechanical components and devices, systems and assemblies; 90% of product sales to their major customers, including Panavision, Imax and Polaroid, are exported.

This expansion is a promising sign for growth for the community of Midland and for Ontario.

In speaking with Elcan's president, Dr Joe DeRemigis, he attributes the company's success to the skill, hard work, dedication and commitment of its employees.

That one of the world's leading high-technology companies is growing so successfully in Ontario and in Muskoka-Georgian Bay should serve as an example that the province is open for business.



I'm certain I speak for my constituents when I say we are very proud to have Hughes Elcan as a member of our local and provincial business community.

#### HIGHWAY 17

**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott and Russell):** Last Wednesday Paul Godin of Rockland, a father of two, was killed on Highway 17. On July 9, 1996, another man from Rockland, Denis Trottier, was killed on Highway 17. On June 21, 1996, Allan Isabel was killed in a motorcycle accident near Rockland.

In January 1996, on this same stretch of highway where 23 serious accidents occurred in the last eight months, another man from Rockland, Mr Ian Shiveral, was killed in a traffic accident. Last November, a mere 10 months later, the late Ian Shiveral's son Bryan and two other students from Rockland District High School were involved in a fatal accident at that same killer stretch of Highway 17. Bryan Shiveral suffered serious injuries.

Bryan Shiveral is only 19. He lost his father in a car accident in 1996 and his mother in 1995. Fortunately, Bryan is a very positive young man. I want to bring encouraging words to Bryan, who is still in the hospital, and I want to acknowledge the work of the Rockland Lions Club and the Rockland OPP volunteer victims' group, especially Garth Hampson, who organized a Bash for Bryan that was attended by more than 500 people at the Rockland District High School on Sunday.

Once again, the people of Prescott-Russell have shown great community spirit.

#### NORTHERN AIR SERVICE

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** A year ago, when the Minister of Northern Development and Mines announced that the norOntair service that had been established in northern Ontario by the Davis government, serving 17 communities, would be discontinued, we indicated that we believed the private sector would not be able to pick up these routes and make a profit.

The Minister of Northern Development and Mines at that time, though, assured us that all the communities served by norOntair would indeed get good service from the private sector and that the private sector would be more efficient and would make a profit.

Three communities immediately did not get air service from the private sector and so the minister set up a subsidy system with Pem Air. Since that time, most of the private carriers have abandoned the routes they took over. Now as many as 10 communities in northern Ontario, including Wawa in my constituency, do not have air service from the private sector.

The minister has caused this problem and he hasn't fixed it. He has extended a subsidy to Wawa, but the service now goes through Sudbury instead of Sault Ste Marie. These subsidies run only until the end of March. The question is, what happens at the end of March? Will there be air service properly serving these communities in northern Ontario after the end of the fiscal year?

The Minister of Northern Development and Mines and the Tories broke the system. Now it's time they fixed it.

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#### CURLING CHAMPIONSHIPS

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** I am proud and deeply honoured to rise and pay tribute to everyone from my community involved in organizing the 1997 Ontario Ladies Curling Championships being held in Peterborough January 22 to 26.

The 10 best women's curling teams from across Ontario will gather in Peterborough to demonstrate their skills and precision on the ice in order to become the province's representatives at the 1997 Scott Tournament of Hearts next month in Vancouver.

Peterborough has a remarkable history of hosting major provincial and national sporting events. Peterborough has been a host to national lacrosse championships, provincial softball championships, the Memorial Cup and now a provincial curling tournament.

The dedication and hard work of tournament convenor Joan Martin of the Peterborough Curling Club and all the people at the club and the many volunteers is most greatly appreciated.

Congratulations to my constituents. I am confident that the 1997 Ontario Ladies Curling Championship in Peterborough will be the best ever.

#### TRUCKING SAFETY

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville):** The only thing that's gone up faster than municipal property taxes in Ontario in the last week is the number of incidents involving flying truck wheels. The Minister of Transportation has repeatedly said that his initiatives in the last two years will help to curb a problem that everyone in this province is afraid of.

We know that this minister's actions to date have not solved the problem. The Ontario Provincial Police have said we have a very serious problem that isn't being dealt with in the Metro Toronto area. The Canadian Automobile Association has said we have a serious problem that's not being dealt with properly. The official opposition has asked for a legislative inquiry into this issue so that we can deal with it in its entirety, so that we can have public hearings before the people so that all groups that are affected and all parties that have an interest have an opportunity to respond.

We again urge the minister to agree to a legislative inquiry into the issue of truck safety and truck safety inspections and allow this process to unfold so that we can work together to ensure that the number of accidents related to truck safety and flying wheels eventually goes down in this province.

The minister has not responded. We call upon him again today to recognize the fear and concern resultant from this issue and deal with it responsibly so the people of this province feel safer on their roads.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** In Metropolitan Toronto, today as we speak, the most amazing development of citizen-led democracy can be seen. The Tory government has been turning up its nose and



treating with scorn and disdain the efforts of citizens who come together to voice their opposition to this government's agenda with respect to the megacity and the mega-dumping of services on Metropolitan Toronto.

Just a few short weeks ago 20 people coming together, forming themselves into a group called Citizens for Local Democracy, began the process of meeting on a weekly basis. In four short weeks, last night at that meeting there were over 1,500 people. That movement is growing. I want to say to those people: (1) Congratulations; (2) Your work is paying off. We just got word today that there has now been an agreement on the part of the government not to call Bill 103 this afternoon. This is really important because that puts off yet another day the passage of a time allocation motion and the passage of second reading of this bill.

That commitment came along with finally an agreement to have a House leaders' meeting so that we can sit down and discuss the process of this bill. As I've said before in this House, last Thursday the New Democratic caucus, through our House leader, put out our demands: We want full public hearings, we want everyone to be heard, we want them around Metropolitan Toronto and all the cities and we want third reading to happen after the democratic expression of the referendum. That's not too much ask.

### CHANGING TIDES IN EDUCATION

**Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock):** I would like to advise the House and the people of Ontario that I recently had the privilege of taking part in a conference at Ridley College in St Catharines entitled Changing Tides in Education.

The keynote address was by our Minister of Education and Training, the Honourable John Snobelen. He acknowledged that we are about to embark on a change process, a process that can be both positive and transformational for the children and youth of this great province, who often cannot envision their own futures.

Just as the minister's address was upbeat and visionary, so too were the other speakers: Pauline Laing, Jean Hewitt and Jim Lang.

Mrs Laing, having recently joined the ministry from the Durham Board of Education, spoke on the topic of the current secondary school reform process.

Dr Hewitt has been a teacher and school leader for many years and offers workshops for teachers and school administrators on leadership and educational change.

Mr Lang is well known to most educators as an internationally recognized authority on entrepreneurship in education.

I want to personally acknowledge and thank the minister for coming to the Niagara region, and Ridley College for its leadership. It was very much appreciated.

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

#### TEAM CANADA

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I rise today to update the members of the Legislature on the recent

Team Canada trade mission. Let me begin by saying how proud I was to have led Ontario's largest ever Team Canada delegation, and the single largest group on this trip, as we did business in Korea, the Philippines and Thailand.

Our delegation had outstanding representation from all sectors of our economy: 65 businesses, as well as business associations representing Ontario manufacturers, exporters, agribusinesses and health care, joined us on this trip. We also had representatives from four governmental agencies, which support Ontario firms' export and business activities, and 12 educational institutions.

Mayor Morrow of Hamilton, Mayor Christie of Kitchener, Mayor McCallion of Mississauga, Mayor Cousens of Markham, Mayor Holtzman of Ottawa, Regional Chair Clark from Ottawa-Carleton and Metro Toronto Councillor Cho rounded out a most distinguished group.

I want to acknowledge the dedication, the professionalism and the strength of the Ontario delegation and its contribution to the mission and the ongoing economic growth and prosperity of our province.

I had one main objective in participating in this mission. That objective was to bring jobs to Ontario, and I believe we accomplished that goal.

I had the honour of overseeing contract signings by Ontario business leaders in Seoul, Korea, worth more than \$140 million. I signed two important memoranda of understanding between the Ontario International Trade Corp and two of Korea's main construction associations.

The first agreement was signed with the Korean Housing Builders Association. It will provide a framework for joint initiatives which promote Ontario's manufactured housing and building products capabilities to Korean builders.

The second agreement was signed with the International Contractors Association of Korea. This agreement will facilitate initiatives, such as seminars and exchange of business delegations, designed to familiarize Korean contractors with Ontario's engineering and consulting capabilities.

In the Philippines, Ontario's high-tech companies netted the most deals. The new agreements, valued at more than \$100 million, are in the areas of engineering, telecommunications, solar power, computer networks and fire protection systems technology. These deals will help to create the kind of highly skilled jobs in Ontario that the province needs in this information age.

Our leading-edge industries had similar success in Thailand, signing agreements worth over \$240 million. These agreements ranged from the introduction of a wireless telecommunications system to the establishment of a network of laboratories specializing in environmental testing, to a satellite technology contract with the Asia Broadcasting and Communications network.

Team Ontario and the results we produced are evidence of the value of partnerships between the public and private sectors in promoting our great province abroad. We returned not only with signed deals in our hands but with great potential for more business down the road. We marketed everything from software to wine, from pre-engineered homes to Candu reactors, from cattle hides to insurance.



Together we were able to strengthen prospects for Ontario businesses in overseas markets. This approach, as many of you know, is a crucial part of our government's Market Ontario strategy to bring jobs to our province.

In the past 18 months our government has moved forward on our plan to make Ontario the number one jurisdiction in which to live, work, invest and raise a family.

We are cutting income taxes to create jobs — as much as 40% for low-income families. We have removed barriers to job creation by eliminating red tape and unnecessary regulation and by reducing the costs of doing business. We have given hope to people caught in the cycle of welfare dependency by making mandatory work for welfare a reality in Ontario. Already 200,000 fewer people are dependent on welfare today than when our government took office.

We're making much-needed investments in health care technology. We're strengthening opportunities for our young people by restoring quality, accountability and higher standards to our education system. We're lifting the burden of debt on our children by ending government waste and duplication and by staying the course for a balanced budget.

Our plan is working. As we on Team Ontario told everyone we met on this recent mission, "In Ontario the future's right here."

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**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** I want to welcome the Premier back, although, I must say, it's as if he never left. We saw his picture on TV every night in a very expensive advertising campaign under way.

There was a time when we used to send our leaders to Asian countries to provide them with some instruction in some of the fundamental tenets of democracy. Maybe it's time we invite Asian leaders here to instruct our leader in some of the basics of democracy. That's bringing me to the issue of megacity.

This Premier wants to impose upon the people of Metro Toronto tremendous change and, in response to that change, the people of Toronto have decided in their wisdom, through their municipal representatives, to hold referenda. This government insists that it intends to proceed with this change without paying any attention whatsoever to the results of those referenda. Those voices ought to be heeded and, just as those people have a right to express their opinion, this government has a corresponding obligation to pay heed to that opinion.

Mega-week was unleashed, Mr Premier, as you will well know, across the land last week, and we have come to the conclusion, quite simply, as have various other groups, that the net result is a property tax explosion for the people of Ontario. You have downloaded, you have transferred an additional \$1 billion in new costs to property taxpayers right across the province, and there are some implications that are not so obvious and we haven't really had time to address those, but I want to take a moment just to do that right now.

As a result of this transfer of what are sometimes called soft costs on to property taxpayers, Ontario in the long run is going to become a less caring and compas-

sionate place in which to live. Take welfare, for instance. The benefits you obtain through welfare are now going to become a function, in part, of where you live. We have moved away from that over a number of decades in Ontario. The provincial government has assumed responsibility for those in need.

What we're doing now is downloading this responsibility, which is properly that of the government of Ontario, on to individual municipalities, and it's not so farfetched to think that municipalities will be sending not-so-subtle signals to welfare recipients, for instance, that it would be better for them if they were to move on. "Move along, we can't afford you. You're interfering with our quality of life. If we pay for you, then we can't afford our public transit, we can't afford public housing, we can't afford public health." That's an implication I think this Premier doesn't really understand. At the end of the day what we're talking about is a less caring and compassionate Ontario.

Those communities that are going to be hardest hit by those are the larger urban centres, places like Ottawa and Toronto in particular. The larger urban centres with large cores will have no choice but to continue to assume responsibility for those who are down and out on their luck and those in the other centres will find it easier to move them along.

It was a sad week for Ontario last week. Not only are we talking about an additional \$1 billion in property taxes that are going to be dealt out to property taxpayers throughout the province, we're also looking at a future that's not as bright. Contrary to what the Premier would have us believe, it's not as bright in Ontario. As a result of last week's initiatives it's going to be a less caring and compassionate place in which to live.

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** I think the Premier is going to have to take many more of these missions abroad to make up for the damage he's wreaking at home. By his offloading, by this government's offloading of all these additional costs on to municipalities, you are destroying our domestic economy as a result, and it's not coming back in the numbers this government had hoped. The job creation isn't there. The government has an abysmal record in job creation.

Mr Premier, get out there and sell Ontario even more. We should have you out there every week doing this to make up for the damage you've brought Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. I know it's been a long time since you've talked to each other, since of course caucuses this morning, so I'd appreciate it if you could just go back to your seats, particularly the Minister of Environment and Energy, actually. You're causing me the most problems out there. It's sometimes more difficult to know whether you're in your seat or not, but I can tell now that you moved. Thank you.

Responses, leader of the third party.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I found it quite interesting that in the week when the government was downloading health care costs, downloading social assistance costs, downloading transportation costs, downloading policing costs, downloading library costs on to municipalities and the municipal taxpayer in order to find \$3 billion to finance their tax cut for the wealthy,



while that was happening in Ontario and municipalities were having to deal with all of that bad news, the Premier was trying to hide on the other side of the world.

We know that the Premier likes the United States, we know that the Premier likes the American way of doing things, and it's a fine tradition in the United States that when things aren't going well at home, the President tries to go abroad to somehow get away from the news.

Premier, we see through your strategy. While your government is forcing all the nasty decisions down on to municipalities and down on to the municipal tax base and putting municipalities in a position where either they have to start cutting these important community services or they have to start cutting these important health care services or they have to raise the municipal property tax substantially, you're trying to dissociate yourself from it as much as possible and finding a diversion elsewhere in the world.

I want to say something about your trip. I found it interesting that while you were gone, a couple of newspapers did some research and found that our exports to countries like Korea, the Philippines and Thailand have actually gone down over the two years that you've been making these trips. Perhaps you'd like to explain to people why our exports to these countries have actually been going down during the two years you've been making trips to these Asian countries.

I also think, Premier, you should respond to this: A newspaper that identifies very closely with you, a newspaper that has a hard time saying anything bad about your government, the *Toronto Sun*, noted that more jobs have disappeared in November and December through your government cutbacks than were created by the private sector. The statistics released by your government and reported by the *Sun* report that Ontario lost 25,000 jobs in the last four months due to your cutbacks. Private sector employment rose by 7,000 in December while public sector employment fell by 19,000 in December; in other words, a net loss of 12,000 jobs in one month because of your cutbacks.

400

I also think the Premier should answer for something else. The Premier says 200,000 fewer people are on social assistance, but not even that many jobs have been created. Even if we assume that all of the jobs this Premier talks about — and there aren't nearly enough — even if we assume that all the people who were on social assistance got those jobs, there are still a whole bunch unaccounted for. I suspect those people are out on the street. I suspect they've become the homeless. If that's what the Premier was trying to tell people in Asia is good about Ontario, what an awful message.

I would like the Premier to explain something else. We know that there are 87,000 more people unemployed in Ontario today than there were a year ago at this time. In fact, Premier, you are falling further behind. You create a few jobs because, yes, American interest rates are low and Canadian interest rates are low, but in fact you're falling further and further behind. In the Common Sense Revolution you talked about 725,000 new jobs. You're so far off the mark that you can't even call that a target any more, and you're falling further and further behind. In

fact the unemployment rate among young people is going higher; the real unemployment rate among young people is getting worse.

Then I want to say just a word about education, because you say here that you've done some good things in education. The only thing I can see is that your Minister of Education has tried to create a lot of diversions so that while there are diversions and while there's a lot of confusion, he can reach in there and take another \$1 billion out of education, another \$1 billion away from our children.

Then there's health care. The only news that I see in health care is more nurses being laid off, more jobs —

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

#### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I'd like to take this opportunity to direct your attention to the members' gallery west. In there is the previous member for Waterloo North, Mr Herb Epp. Welcome.

#### PRESS GALLERY PRESIDENT

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: I have a point of privilege that I think you as Speaker and in your previous incarnation as an opposition member would have a good deal of interest in. I'm seeking your assistance in this regard.

This morning the president of the Queen's Park press gallery, Richard Brennan, was interrogated by the Ontario Provincial Police because of the fact that he was able to gain access to a report that we in the opposition, you will recall, were seeking some time ago when the government was dealing with the issue of video lottery terminals. The report was entitled *Gambling in Ontario: Current Enforcement Concerns, 1995*. We felt that was relevant to the bill being discussed.

However, my concern is a greater one, and that is the use of the OPP — and you're in charge of people within this precinct, or you help us out, I know, on many occasions. We know there are people who are concerned about this. I know, for instance, this view was shared by the now chief communications officer for the Premier, who said previously, "There's an undeniable sense of apprehension when a police officer sent by your government comes to your office unannounced and asks you questions about what you do and do not know." He went on to say, "The use of the police in this manner could have a significant chilling effect on people who happen to acquire documents that the government prefer not see the light of day."

I know even the Solicitor General, Mr Runciman, was concerned about this in the past, and that's why I raise it again. He said, "This appears to be a witchhunt to save the government some embarrassment. I want to say that it's an outrage," when the similar incident happened previously. He went on to say, "I want the minister to stand up in the House today and apologize to Mr Brennan, apologize to Mr Coyle, apologize to the people of Ontario for using the police for political purposes."

I'm concerned that a member of the press gallery, and the president in this case, simply because he was able to



gain access to a report that many of us in this House felt should be provided to the members of this assembly in any event, is being intimidated through the use of an interrogation by the OPP.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I just have a quick question on the point of privilege. I'd like to ask the member if he knows, did this interrogation take place within the precinct?

**Mr Bradley:** I am not aware whether it did. The individual involved is an individual who works within this precinct and deals with matters within this precinct.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Is it on the same point of privilege, the member for Algoma? Well, I'll say before you get up — it's very short — that I need to know whether it happened in here or not. Obviously, if it didn't happen in this place, then there's not a lot the Speaker will or can do about it. I will say that the reporter did come to me previous to this happening and asked about the process and said that he was going to be interrogated. I directly said to the reporter, "No, it can't happen in the precinct," and, "No, I will not allow the police to come in here to interrogate you." I can only assume then that it didn't happen in here. I hope, the member for Algoma, you can tell me one way or the other. If you can, that's fine. But unless it happened in the precinct, there's no point of privilege.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** On the point of privilege, Speaker: I know that you are aware of members in the time of the previous government who used to, as a way of making a point, hold up a sign "Call Police," even though that was a demonstration, which is of course not allowed according to the rules in the assembly. The point was being made that a government cannot and should not, must not, try to intimidate critics, particularly members of the assembly, particularly members of the press who are carrying out their responsibility to report on the public affairs of the House. I can tell you that I understand the interrogation did not take place in this precinct, but it still does not deal with the fact that the government is attempting to bully its critics.

**The Speaker:** Let me say this then: There are two points here. The point of privilege doesn't extend to members of the media. Secondly, it didn't take place in the precinct, so clearly there's no jurisdiction that I have over the privilege. To the members for St Catharines and Algoma, there's no need for me to take this away to even consider it. There is simply no point of privilege. It may be something you'll want to ask the government about. That's within order. But strictly on a point of privilege, no, it doesn't exist.

**Mr Bradley:** May I just ask you a question then and you can help me out with this, where I might take this, just a very quick question? What if the Solicitor General had ordered this investigation? What would I do then?

**The Speaker:** Again, you can't have a speculative point of privilege; you either have it or you don't.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** Speaker, I just wanted to raise a point of order and ask through you if the government House leader would help to clarify something which does have an impact on the orderly procedures in the House, certainly for this afternoon. It's my under-

standing that the government does not intend today to call Bill 103. I ask, because there are lots of people here who are interested in this issue, if we can get a clear understanding from the government House leader —

**The Speaker:** I appreciate where you're heading with this, and it's not a point of order or a point of privilege, and it is in fact out of order. The process is very clear, it's printed, it's on your desk. Those are the procedures. The orders of the day are called. They can be called by the House leader. He calls them when they're due. If it's to be announced or whatever, that is not unusual. So no, I simply will not allow the House leader to start entertaining questions like that pre-question period. You can ask him in question period.

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## ORAL QUESTIONS

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Premier. Last night I went to a meeting of some 1,500 people who had gathered together in downtown Toronto in response to plans on the part of your government to bring about massive change to the way Metro Toronto is organized. They asked me to give you a message, quite simply. They said: "Tell the Premier that the people of Toronto don't want to be forced into a megacity. Tell him we need full public hearings, not just a token week or two." They said to tell him not to decide on a megacity until they've had an opportunity to vote in a referendum.

Premier, are you going to do that for them? On their behalf, I'm asking, will you have full and sufficient public hearings to give everyone a say and will you pledge today that you will wait until the March 3 referenda are over before making your megacity bill into law?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** First of all, let's be very clear: Metropolitan Toronto will be the same size before this bill as it is after. There will not be one citizen more, not one citizen less. It will be exactly the same size. There are some 2.2 million people in Metropolitan Toronto now and there will be 2.2 million people in Metropolitan Toronto after, so it will be the same size. What will change is that instead of seven levels of government, there will be one. There will be fewer politicians, there will be fewer bureaucrats, so we can have more dollars go to services.

With regard to the specific request, of course we'd be delighted to ensure full public hearings; we'd be delighted to accede to all the requests you've outlined today.

**Mr McGuinty:** Just so I'm very clear on this, the Premier has just told us that he's in full agreement with public hearings that are going to be full enough, long enough and sufficient enough to allow all to have their say, and second, he had indicated that this Bill 103 will not be made law until the referenda results are in and have been fully considered.

I just want to make sure that's perfectly clear and I will make sure, Premier, by asking you once more if I've got this straight: Is that what we're talking about here?



You're going to wait until the referenda results are in and you've given them their due consideration, and you're going to ensure that we have full, sufficient and adequate public hearings to allow all interested in this to have their say?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Let me be very clear. I said yes in answer to your first question and I'll say yes now. Now, I want to say this: There will be some who will be opposed, who will think you should have five years of hearings. There will be some who will think that until you've talked to all 2.2 million to ensure that you can't possibly make the changes so taxpayers can get the massive savings due to them next year — that they want that. But will we provide for full and adequate and representative hearings that make sure all viewpoints are heard, in addition to all the hearings that have taken place, in addition to all the consultations, in addition to everything else, and do I expect that this law will be passed before any PIN number or phone call or whatever forms of consultation will take place, no, I don't think it will be. I think all that information will be before us.

**Mr McGuinty:** I had the opportunity to address the crowd last night and one of the things I emphasized to them was that this was a non-partisan issue. We think —

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** Mike said the opposite of what he believes now.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order.

**Mr Phillips:** Eliminate Metro. That's what you said before the election. Do you think you can get away with that? People will see through that dishonesty.

**The Speaker:** Order. I heard that. The member for Scarborough-Agincourt, I'm going to ask you withdraw that; it's out of order.

**Mr Phillips:** I'll withdraw.

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr McGuinty:** Premier, we Liberals think your ideas are wrong-headed, the NDP think your ideas are wrong-headed, and there are many, many Tories who happen to agree.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** The members for Nepean and Quinte, please come to order. Opposition members. Thank you. Fort William and Algoma, please come to order. Thank you. I appreciate your cooperation.

Final supplementary.

**Mr McGuinty:** I understand the Premier's embarrassment and his reluctance to admit it, but there are many Tories who believe his ideas are wrongheaded when it comes to the megacity. To name but a few: Joyce Trimmer, Mel Lastman, and just yesterday we heard what Gordon Chong had to say. He's a Metro councillor and he's one of the handpicked appointees to the Who Does What panel and he's a lifelong Tory. He said something has gone dreadfully wrong: "I can't believe any political party would try to tear the guts out of Metro."

Premier, why is it that everyone can see what lies ahead except you and your government? Why are you so bent on causing so much damage to Metropolitan Toronto?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Quite frankly, to do nothing or leave the status quo would be the worst for Metropolitan Toronto. You will recall debates that we had before the

election. You will recall the studies that said the heart and soul was coming out of Toronto, the doughnut effect, that something had to be done to fix it.

What we are doing is bringing in a much stronger, more prosperous, more vibrant Toronto. This legislation will do away with the waste, will do away with some bureaucracy and will put Toronto in a strong, vibrant position to assume its rightful place as the number one city not just in Canada but indeed, in our view, in all of North America. We have had the courage to do it where others dare not follow.

You put off decision after decision. Liberals put off decisions on market value. New Democrats put off decisions on reforming the tax system. Finally a government and a minister and a party with enough courage to put Toronto back on top comes along and all you nay-sayers are there saying: "No. We want the status quo."

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I would ask that the members for Sudbury, Windsor-Sandwich, Fort York, Riverdale —

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** I didn't say anything.

**The Speaker:** No, you didn't say anything. You yelled a few things but you didn't say anything. If you'd all come to order, I'd appreciate it.

New question, leader of the official opposition.

## PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):**

My question is to the Premier, to the man formerly known as the Taxfighter, now known as the Taxhider, to the man responsible for what is going to be the largest single property tax increase in our province's history.

Premier, while you were gone they were trying to sell this mega-week kerfuffle as a wash, that it was going to be an equal swap of services. It's turned into nothing more than a trick to dump hundreds of millions of new taxes, new tax dollars, on the backs of hardworking, decent, honest, law-abiding property taxpayers in Ontario. In fact even after your bailout fund is counted in, you're still shortchanging property taxpayers over \$1 billion. That's \$1 billion in new property taxes. That's a property tax explosion with a nuclear charge.

Premier, how does it feel — we've got to know this now — as a Taxfighter to dump over \$1 billion of new costs on to the backs of property taxpayers?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** Unless the municipalities and those who are elected in the next election are all Liberals and New Democrats, there will be tax cuts in the municipalities. In fact, according to the estimates we have, the changes we are making will allow for up to 10% in property tax reductions by the year 2000.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Premier?

**Hon Mr Harris:** The changes we are bringing in are not only long overdue but will allow municipalities, working in partnership with the government, more autonomy and more authority in many areas, along with the new Municipal Act. Quite frankly, we would expect



property taxes by the year 2000 to go down on average about 10%. All I can do is tell you —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order, please. It's nearly impossible to hear the answer. I'm asking the members to come to order. I don't want to be standing up here every question, but I'm going to. I can't hear the answers, and I have to. 1420

**Hon Mr Harris:** Thank you very much, Speaker.

You speculate, you naysayers, you doomsayers, you purveyors of the status quo \$11-billion deficits that were there. But we're prepared to be judged by results. The property taxes and the level of property taxes will be known long before the next election. If you want to stack your five-year record of tax hikes provincially, fee hikes and the offloading that you put on to municipalities, or if the NDP wants to put its five-year record up against our record, we'll be very happy to do that, come the next election.

**Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa-Rideau):** Defend Peterson, Dalton. You love him.

**The Speaker:** The member for Ottawa-Rideau come to order, please.

**Mr McGuinty:** The Premier finds great comfort in talking about the past, but I want to talk about the future. Your lines are already dated. Nobody buys this; nobody believes this. We all understand that the net consequence, the net effect of mega-week is \$1 billion which are going to be downloading on to property taxpayers right across Ontario. This understanding comes despite your attempt, through television advertising and radio advertising, to confuse us and to confuse the public out there.

We know you're shortchanging municipalities by more than \$1 billion. Everyone knows there's going to be a property tax explosion, and let me promise you, the shock waves from that explosion will rattle your party to its very foundation. What the Premier unleashed last week is going to come back to haunt him. When those chickens come home to roost, they're going to be coming home with a vengeance.

I ask the Premier, if you're so confident that the tax experts, people like the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, are wrong, why are you —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Premier?

**Hon Mr Harris:** We've released the information on what programs cost today. We are also releasing expectations of what they should cost in the future. Some will go up, some will go down. But clearly, to achieve 10% or 15% or 20% property tax reductions, which may be possible, additional savings would have to be found. We would expect, on average, 10% by the year 2000, using best practices. But it may be possible that there will be municipalities that will elect too many Liberal and NDP members and maybe their taxes will only go down 2% or 3%.

We can't predict it all, you see, but we have great confidence in our municipal partners and in our school board partners that we'll be working with that we will deliver far better services, far better quality education and far better municipal services at less cost. That is our track record to date and we expect it will continue in the future.

**Mr McGuinty:** It's very convenient that the benefits that are going to accrue from mega-week won't be felt, won't be experienced by Ontario taxpayers unless and until they re-elect the Premier and his cohorts at the time of the next election.

You don't have to take my word for it. Ask the Canadian Taxpayers' Federation, ask the board of trade, and they're going to tell you the same thing: Your \$1-billion tax gap is going to lead to a property tax explosion right across the province.

The figures are starting to come in. Let's listen: Because of your dumping, property taxpayers in Hamilton are faced with an additional \$69 million in costs. That works out to \$325 for every household. Because of your dumping, London is facing an increase of between 17% and 18% in property taxes, Metro \$378 million, Thunder Bay \$15 million, Ottawa \$81 million, Prescott-Russell \$23 million.

Why don't you just admit that you've got a billion-dollar gap here? Why don't you just admit that as a Premier who promised not to raise property taxes you're in fact raising them by a billion dollars?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I have heard municipalities before lobby for more money and talk about initial budget allocations, even though now we're talking a full year down the road.

I can assure you that there is nothing in what we have announced that should cause taxes to go up and there is everything in what we have announced to allow property taxes to go down.

I can assure you of this: This government is not going to stand by and see any reduction in services to the public, in any social services, in any health services, in any of the programs, in any of the hard services, nor is this government, working in concert with our partners, going to tolerate tax increases, the kind you guys had for the 10 years of the lost decade. You can count on that.

#### PUBLIC SECTOR LAYOFFS

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is for the Premier. You are charging Ontario taxpayers millions of dollars to run your television ads that tell everybody, "Don't worry, be happy." Your Minister of Municipal Affairs has been trying to say that your downloading of health care, social assistance, transportation, policing and libraries will be a wash, that jobs won't be lost, health and community services won't be cut and he says property taxes won't rise.

But then this morning in a scrum, you said to the press that "some of Ryan's employees" will lose their jobs, that there will be fewer public servants, fewer CUPE members; they will lose their jobs. Premier, can you explain that? How many people are going to lose their jobs in this scenario?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** No, I can't give you the exact number, because a lot of these employees work for other employers: municipalities or school boards. But when you have seven municipalities in Metro Toronto serving 2.2 million people and you change to one level of government serving 2.2 million people, we would expect there would be fewer public servants. In



fact, we campaigned saying there'd be fewer public servants. The net result of this will be fewer government employees.

Clearly, with an \$11-billion deficit and high property taxes, we cannot sustain all the government employees you two parties racked up over 10 years, so we've been very upfront, we've been very straightforward. We expect to find savings in the numbers of government employees in school boards and municipalities and in the province of Ontario.

1430

**Mr Hampton:** As I say, a whole bunch of things, a whole bunch of costly things, are being pushed down on to municipalities. These are all important services, so I want to ask the Premier this: Let's be a little clearer. Who exactly are you talking about? Are you talking about those hardworking people who work in municipal homes for the aged or municipal nursing homes and look after our parents and our grandparents? Are you talking about getting rid of them? Are you talking about getting rid of the people who plow the streets and maintain our streets? Are you talking about the people who work in our libraries so that our children are encouraged to read and have an opportunity to read? Are you talking about people who do important public works?

Premier, I think you owe it to people. We know that you're pushing down billions of dollars of costs on to municipalities, and we know that municipalities will either have to raise their property taxes substantially, they will have to cut services or they will have to get rid of a whole bunch of a jobs, or perhaps a combination of all three. I think you owe it to people to be honest. Which of these people and how many of these people are going to lose their jobs?

**Hon Mr Harris:** There are seven CEOs right now in Toronto. After this bill, there will be one.

**Mr Hampton:** I can see the Premier is trying hard to confuse the issue. The CEOs are not CUPE members. In fact, if you want to confine it to your megacity concept, everybody who looks at it says that it's going to add more middle managers; it's going to add more nameless, faceless bureaucrats. People from the United States who have done this say that. People who have looked at Halifax-Dartmouth say that.

Bill 104, your act to kill local democratic control of schools, gives your Education Improvement Commission the power to essentially do away with 55,000 hardworking educational assistants, custodians, maintenance workers, clerical staff, technical and aquatic staff, bus drivers, foodservice workers and English-as-a-second-language teachers.

Can you tell us, Premier, how many people there are you going to put on the unemployment roll, and can you tell us how that's going to affect the education of our children?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Let's be clear. What we are taking off the property taxpayer by the year 2000 is over \$6 billion in education taxes, given where education is going. What we are asking municipalities to pick up is about the same. So if they don't want to cut taxes, if they don't want to find any savings, then there will be no tax increases. On the other hand, if they want to find efficiencies, we believe that there can be some reduction.

You ask about schools: Where are the savings? There will be two thirds fewer trustees, politicians. There will be two thirds fewer trustee supports. There will be half the directors of education. There will be half the directors of finance, half the directors of personnel, half the business superintendents, half the accounts payable clerks, half the accounts receivable clerks, half the human resources department, half the administration support, half the curriculum officers, half the office space and half the office equipment required, plus efficiencies in purchasing, transportation and other areas. With all those savings, we'll have a lot better education with dollars going into the classroom than we had under your administration.

**The Speaker:** New question. Leader of the third party.

**Mr Hampton:** My next question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs, but I would say to the Premier, you have tried to avoid the question. You said it was going to be CUPE members, people who provide the basic services out there in the community, people who look after those homes for the aged, and I would say to you again, you're trying to miss the point.

#### PROPERTY ASSESSMENT

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs: Could you please inform all of us in the House today what is your understanding of the difference between market value assessment and actual value assessment? Could you please tell us what the difference is?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** As the member knows, both are value-based assessment processes, but there is a substantial difference between actual value assessment and market value assessment. Many of the details I would be glad to provide to the member. The system is a current value system and works on a rolling three-year average, which takes a lot of the volatility out of the system.

The other thing is that it's a very fair and equitable system. It's a system that's going to stop the bleeding in Metro Toronto, where these previous governments have allowed the property tax system to go into disarray, costing the municipality of Metro Toronto \$100 million a year. You had the opportunity to fix it; you blew it. You didn't have the guts to do it. We have. We are going to bring fairness and equity back into the tax system.

**Mr Hampton:** Here's a bit of the history, and you should know this: The Golden report says the difference is that actual value assessment is like market value assessment in that it ascribes a value to each property, but it is administered differently in that property values are determined by applying weighting factors that reflect property characteristics. In other words, actual value assessment adjusts for things like size of the property, size of the house, and adds an element of fairness to a market-based system.

When we look through your press releases, Minister, and when we look through the briefing notes provided by Ministry of Finance officials, we can't find any of these things that distinguish between actual value and market value. In fact, here in this House yesterday you basically equated market value and actual value. I'll ask you again:



Since none of the distinguishing things are present in your scheme, isn't your scheme really market value?

**Hon Mr Leach:** No, it's not market value; it's the Ontario fair value assessment system. There are substantial differences. It is a system that is going to bring fairness to the property tax system. It's going to have everybody paying their fair share; no more free rides. People who have not been paying their fair share for many years are going to have to do it, and the thousands and thousands of people in Metro Toronto who are paying more than their fair share will get a reduction in taxes.

**Mr Hampton:** The minister can use all the rhetoric he wants. This is the briefing note from the Ministry of Finance and it says, "Assessments will be based on what properties are sold for." That's market value. I would say to the minister, if it walks like a duck and it talks like a duck, it's a duck. This is market value you're trying to push on people. There is no provision in your legislation for an assessment system which takes into account property characteristics; none of those things. Market value under your reform does not allow for the stabilizing influence of an actual value assessment system.

How do you explain this — this is Al Leach during the election — "My party and I will never support the imposition of MVA in Metro Toronto," yet when we look at the characteristics of what you're imposing on people, it is exactly MVA. When people questioned you about the figures yesterday, you referred to the MVA figures and said: "Go look at that. That will tell you how much it costs." Tell us: Who was telling the truth, Al Leach today, when we know it's now market value, or Al Leach in 1995, during the election?

**Hon Mr Leach:** This is not market value assessment and the member knows it very well. The Ontario fair assessment system is based on current use, not highest and best use. It's a system, again, that is going to bring fairness back into the system and correct the most messed-up assessment system this country has ever seen. You're worried about expenses in Metro? Here's one solution that's immediately going to correct a \$100-million problem.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Quack, quack.

**Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside):** Quack, quack.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. I never thought there would be the day when I'd rule "quack" out of order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Okay. New question, the member for Oakwood.

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#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** To the Premier: Anne Golden who authored the Golden report, the board of trade — your friends — Conservative Metro Councillor Gordon Chong, even people from the taxpayers' federation are saying that you are destroying the economic viability of Metro by jamming this megacity down the throats of its citizens, and on top of that you're dumping

welfare and subsidized housing on Metro. The people are saying, "What do we need a provincial government for?" In fact some of them are even saying, "Maybe we should secede from the province." Premier, is that what you want to create in Metro, another Quebec situation?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** Let me respond to some of the rhetoric about taking 2.2 million people currently in Metro Toronto, governed by seven governments, down to one government. Gordon Chong is very supportive of that; so is the Metro board of trade; so is the taxpayers' coalition. Given the veracity of your facts in the preamble, your question is really irrelevant.

**Mr Colle:** The Premier is wrong, as he is on the \$1 billion. Paul Pagnuelo says this megacity proposal is utter madness and is going to increase property taxes, so I'd like to correct that record.

Premier, do you realize what you're doing to the gap in property taxes between the 905 and the 416 as a result of your megacity proposal and your dumping on Metro welfare? Even the *Globe and Mail*, a very conservative paper, says that your plan for megacity dumping is fatally flawed. People are asking, do you really know what you're doing?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I read an editorial in the *Globe* today that was 100% supportive of everything we're doing.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** New question, the member for Dovercourt.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** My question is to the Premier as well. I'd just say to the Premier that as he gets briefed and brought up to date, he'll discover that a lot of his former friends don't agree with what he's doing on the megacity. My question to him is exactly on that.

One of the reasons they don't agree and one of the reasons we have so many citizens concerned about what you're doing, one of the reasons we saw 1,500 people at a meeting last night in Metropolitan Toronto is not just because of the democratic process that you're trampling on — that's a major issue in and of itself — but it's also because when they recall back, they see a Mike Harris who runs around the province vaunting the fact that he's the man who keeps his promises.

Then they look at the promise you made with respect to Metropolitan Toronto. When you endorsed the report of another one of your ex-political friends, Joyce Trimmer, do you remember the one that said that yes, you were going to make changes in Metropolitan Toronto, but you would maintain the lower-tier municipalities? Now you're doing completely the opposite. That's why people are upset.

What do you say, Premier? As a man who keeps his promises, how do you justify what you're doing?

**Hon Mr Harris:** What we have done is scrapped Metro government and we have one lower-tier municipality in Toronto.

**Mr Silipo:** We'll look forward to how this Premier and his ministers continue to explain that position, which is diametrically opposed to what was said in the report he endorsed, which envisioned very clearly the maintenance of lower-tier municipalities in Metro Toronto. Yes, it talked about abolishing the Metro level of government, but it talked very clearly about maintaining local municipalities. In fact, it envisioned the responsibility for the delivery of some of these services moved to the local



level and others moved out beyond. But it envisioned very clearly, Premier, and you can't cut it both ways, maintaining local municipalities in Metro Toronto. You couldn't have been clearer about that.

When people look at that, they now see a Premier of the province who is not keeping his promise. They see a Premier of the province who is reneging 180 degrees on that basic promise, and that's why they want to make sure not only that there is a public process of hearings that go beyond March 3 but that you will actually listen and be affected by the things you will hear in them. Premier, will you ensure that this process takes place?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Here are the eight recommendations of the Trimmer task force report:

"(1) There is too much government.

"(2) The current two-level system of government is too expensive, too bureaucratic and too unaccountable.

"(3) The government closest to the people is considered the most responsive, efficient and accountable.

"(4) Political boundaries often act as impediments to effective, efficient delivery of service.

"(5) Broader regional coordination for transportation is essential.

"(6) Unfairness in the property tax system is broadly acknowledged and in need of immediate attention" — something you guys are opposing.

"(7) In order to achieve greater efficiencies, local government should encourage more private-public partnerships.

"(8) There is high value placed on local communities and the sense of belonging which a strong community engenders. Policies must be designed to protect and preserve the uniqueness of neighbourhoods."

We've followed through on all eight.

**Mr Silipo:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to ask for unanimous consent that you give the Premier more time so he can read the paragraph that starts, "As you will note, these observations" are where the real answer lies, and he omitted from that —

**Interjections:** Agreed.

**The Speaker:** You know, I haven't even asked yet. The member for Dovercourt wishes unanimous consent so the Premier can read from that section. Agreed? No. It wasn't agreed.

## AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

**Mr Ed Doyle (Wentworth East):** My question is for the minister responsible for seniors issues. Many seniors in my riding of Wentworth East have in the past expressed concern about rising auto insurance rates. Hardest hit, of course, have been seniors on fixed incomes. I'm wondering if the minister could let the House know how those concerns have been addressed through this summer's passage of Bill 59, the Automobile Insurance Rate Stability Act.

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Seniors Issues]):** I'd like to thank my colleague for the question and indicate that when this government brought in Bill 59 it was aware that in the previous decade, when the provincial Parliament attempted to restore some

stability to auto rates, our seniors seemed to be particularly hard hit. We designed the plan in this legislation to ensure that we restored good rates for good driving records and restored fairness, balance and stability into the system, and seniors have been the primary beneficiaries of this new legislation.

Since November 1, I'm pleased to report, insurance companies must provide a discount if they are approached by a retired senior or someone on a fixed income, and there are real bargains out there for people if they'll call their insurance companies. In fact, statistics have shown that two thirds of companies out there are offering a 5% discount, a third of them are offering between 5% and 10% and there are eight companies offering discounts of greater than 10% for Ontario seniors.

**Mr Doyle:** Mr Speaker, many seniors in my riding are familiar with many high costs, such as particularly high education taxes and so on. I'd like to ask the minister if he could give a real example of a senior who is currently experiencing some new savings, because this is a government that is listening.

**Hon Mr Jackson:** I'd like to report that even members in opposition have shared with me that their seniors have approached them and advised them of these savings, which they appreciate, and that they share in the credit because it was a bill that passed in this Parliament.

I was talking to one of my constituents, Bill Carlton, who's been retired, from Burlington. He and his wife own two cars, \$1,700 was his insurance, he's had a \$200 discount and he is quite pleased. He's one of many success stories in discounts. Bill Carlton, a senior, has stated publicly, "I'm pleased with the direction this government is moving in," not only with his insurance rates, but with cleaning up all the waste in government.

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## PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Premier. It has to do with the impact on residential property taxpayers of all the various moves your government is making, and I will say that in our opinion it is offloading in the most dramatic way on property taxes.

I want to focus on one specific issue: the business occupancy tax. We have been told here in Metropolitan Toronto that the elimination of the business occupancy tax is a \$650-million hit on the revenue for our municipalities of Metro Toronto — 15% of their revenue gone. I gather that your government is saying: "Tough luck. Replace it by increasing property tax on other things."

What does your government expect municipalities to do to recover the \$650 million? Will that be put on business property tax or the residential property tax?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I think the Minister of Finance has a few of those —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Minister of Finance.

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** To the member, municipalities have the ability in the legislation to choose to make up the lost revenue



in business occupancy tax by spreading it among the same category of taxpayer, among other classes of taxpayers, provided they don't raise the disparity in the rate between, for example, commercial property taxes and residential property taxes.

**Mr Phillips:** The answer we just got is very clear, then, to people in Metro Toronto: \$650 million in revenue — gone. That was municipal revenue. The province took the credit for it, eliminated it, but it's all municipal revenue. The minister just said that a portion of it will have to go on the residential property taxpayer in Metro Toronto.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** No, he didn't. He said no such thing.

**Mr Phillips:** The people in the province should understand that the Minister of Community and Social Services, who has offloaded social assistance, child care and long-term care, is barracking and yelling when we are trying to point out that they are offloading on the residential property taxpayer.

I will say to the Minister of Finance once again, you have said in your answer that local municipalities cannot increase the proportion on business. By definition, then, a portion of this has to go on the residential property taxpayers. So you have cut out \$650 million and you are loading more and more on the residential property taxpayer. How much of that \$650 million do you think will go on the residential taxpayer?

**Hon Mr Eves:** That is not what I said. Who does the member think are paying business occupancy taxes today? Businesses. Now the municipality will have the choice of taking that portion and putting it on the commercial property tax if they so choose. However, Ontario, after consultation with the municipalities — AMO, ROMA, FONOM — is going to establish ranges of acceptability between —

**Mr Phillips:** They can't put it all on the property taxpayer.

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Eves:** Now, just a minute. Excuse me. I say to the honourable members that if they have any small business people in their constituencies whatsoever, they might want to start to think about them.

**Mr Phillips:** I have a lot more residential property taxpayers and I am thinking about them right now.

**Hon Mr Eves:** I say to the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, the residential property taxpayers in his riding, as he acknowledged in 1990, are going to get a tax break under this legislation.

**The Speaker:** The member for Lake Nipigon.

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** That's a new definition for new math. You don't need a calculator to figure out that new math.

**Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation):** You didn't have the guts to do that either, Elinor.

**The Speaker:** The member for Oriole and the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, if you have a conversation, there are lots of other places.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** The member for Oakwood.

**Mrs Caplan:** Well, so much for revenue-neutral. Out the window, right on the backs of taxpayers.

**The Speaker:** The member for Oriole, please. Thank you.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** She's right, though.

**The Speaker:** Well, somehow that doesn't shock me that you think that. I still have to move on. The member for Lake Nipigon.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** The member for Scarborough-Agincourt preaches for his parish and talks about the impact of the business occupancy tax where he lives, to the tune of \$650 million. Let's enlarge the picture and face the reality that we're talking about \$1.6 billion at the provincial level. This is a tax that has been removed, a revenue from the municipalities at present, through the business occupancy tax.

Minister, you established a rate of a 30% levy on small retail businesses. If you're the Royal Bank in downtown Toronto, if you're the biggie, you pay your share, you pay 75%. You can't have it eight different ways. Who's going to pay for the difference? Who's going to pick up the slack? Who will pick up the \$1.6 billion, which is massive, because you have given a gift to your friends on Bay Street? You've been consistent on the back of small businesses. Who's going to make up the slack? Tell me, Minister.

**Hon Mr Eves:** To the honourable member, municipalities all across the province are going to have the ability to make the decision whether they ask commercial taxpayers —

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Eves:** No. Excuse me. Businesses are already paying —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Hon Mr Eves:** Businesses will be paying if municipalities choose to have commercial-assessed properties pick up the difference. Municipalities will also have the ability — he talks about banks etc — to establish two different rates of taxation for commercial properties, one for small businesses, one for larger businesses, therefore answering your bank question.

**Mr Pouliot:** The minister is absolutely right: It's not that easy. What you're saying is that it's always better to have someone else die for their country than yourselves. You've downloaded. You see, the trick here, the downfall, is that there is limitation: You cannot place relative burdens among different classes of property. It's a devil's choice, nothing short of that.

Because of the regulations, because of the limitations, municipalities are negotiating and will be forced to levy with both hands behind their back. Who is going to pay the residential levy: property owners in Ontario or small business? It has to be one of the two. Pick one.

**Hon Mr Eves:** Yes, somebody is going to have to pay. Somebody is paying now. Somebody has been paying since 1904. This will be a far more equitable system for small businesses in Ontario than the antiquated system of business occupancy tax that's been in place since 1904, and municipal representatives will be able to make the



appropriate choice for their community. Some communities are fortunate enough to have a lot of commercial and industrial assessment, and some, like mine, are not.

### SALT CONTAMINATION

**Mr Bill Grimmitt (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** My question is for the Minister of Transportation. As the minister will know, in my riding a number of my constituents have road salt problems. Some of them have salt contamination in their wells that are adjacent to roads; some of them are not adjacent to roads. Can you advise the House, Minister, just what your ministry is doing to make sure that MTO operations are not the prime cause of salt contamination?

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I'd like to thank the member for Muskoka-Georgian Bay for the question. The issue of salt contamination is of great concern to my ministry, and for that reason my parliamentary assistant, the member for Oshawa, has been visiting some of these problem areas.

We are currently engaged in a number of initiatives to limit contamination. Ministry of Transportation staff are now using more effective application-of-salt techniques. These initiatives are possible during winter maintenance operations through improved equipment and training of people, and also the new techniques I mentioned. We have also incorporated a design measure, such as lining ditches in particular problem areas, to prevent and reduce the salt from actually entering the earth. We will continue to explore whatever other possibilities we might have.

**Mr Grimmitt:** It's good to see that your ministry is taking action to prevent this type of contamination from occurring in the future. Many of my constituents, however, want to know what you're doing for the people whose drinking water is contaminated now. Will you tell the House what action your ministry is taking to ensure that these people have access to clean drinking water?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** The Ministry of Transportation deals with the issues of soil contamination on an individual, claim-by-claim basis. MTO will provide and pay for a groundwater expert to come in to investigate the damage, particularly to the drinking water supply. If it is determined that MTO road salt is responsible for the contamination, we will accept liability and provide assistance to the claimant. Depending on the situation, my ministry will provide bottled drinking water; we might pay for drilling of a new well or we might replace damaged plumbing. But this government will stand behind Ontarians in making sure they will be protected from any salt contamination.

1500

### SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** My question is to the Premier. Yesterday afternoon Thunder Bay resident Veronica Manuel addressed the standing committee on social development regarding her severely disabled son, Dylan. Veronica told a harrowing story of the extreme measures she has had to take to keep her son at home despite the government's actions, including reducing her social assistance, imposing user fees for all the prescrip-

tion drugs Dylan needs and indeed ignoring all her letters to you and to your ministers. Premier, your own committee members were deeply shocked by Veronica's story, and now you're dumping the responsibility for Veronica and Dylan, as well as a half-million other children in this province, on to residential taxpayers.

My question is simply this: What will you say to Veronica if your deep cuts and out-of-control policies force her to give up her child?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I know the minister has some information on that.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Minister of Health?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** Mr Speaker, I believe it was referred to me.

**The Speaker:** Premier, I know you said "the minister." I don't know which minister you're referring it to.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I know they all care, but the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I appreciate the very eloquent case this particular individual made to the committee yesterday. She has sacrificed considerably to take care of her child at home, and I think her case, more than anything, demonstrates why we need to improve the system to support families like that who care for their children at home. That's one of the reasons we were able to find \$15 million in additional money to try and support women such as herself who need that support at home.

The other thing I would like to remind the honourable member of is that, no, we have not ignored the letters from this particular individual. We have met with this individual and her family on many occasions to try and sort out and put the supports in place. We will continue to do that.

The final point is that we are not dumping these programs or these services anywhere. The province takes them very seriously. We are continuing to exercise our responsibility to fund and support these families.

**Mr Gravelle:** One doesn't know where to begin to respond to that, Minister, for God's sake. We managed to get a meeting with one of your assistants — no response to that meeting with one of your assistants.

You cannot deny that dumping on municipalities is taking place and that is simply going to cause a tax explosion in many of our communities. Thunder Bay city council was told last night that your dumping will add \$15 million to the operating costs in Thunder Bay, which will potentially force a 20% increase in property taxes.

Our community in Thunder Bay is sufficiently desperate that they are now investigating a legal challenge to your out-of-control policies. This brutal hatchet job is going to put municipalities in a very difficult position and the dumping is going to force them to make some excruciating decisions. The minister cannot simply waffle out of this one.

Minister, in that the Premier won't respond — and I will also say that it's not just your ministry that affects Veronica and some of the others. What we really need to know is, why don't you care? Why does the government not care what happens to our seniors and our children and to people like Veronica and Dylan? Please, please answer.



**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I appreciate the sincerity of the member opposite in trying to help many of the individuals who are trying to care for their children at home. That is one of the reasons we actually had additional money two weeks ago to try to support families who are caring for children at home.

I would like to remind the honourable member that the municipal level of government is one of the reasons the social support system in this province is as good as it is. They are part of the delivery system. They have been our partners in funding. They can continue to do that. We have additional supports in place to make sure those municipalities can live up to their responsibilities. We've improved their situation by taking the education costs off the back of the property taxpayer so they'll be able to afford these responsibilities.

We have not walked away from these programs. They are extremely important. There are many folks who depend on them, and that's why we think we are going to continue to improve the way they are delivered.

### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** My question is to the Minister of Labour regarding the investigation into the tragic deaths of two steelworkers at Dofasco in Hamilton last week. My office was told just a few hours ago by officials of the United Steelworkers of America, which indeed represents those two workers, that their union is being stonewalled in this investigation. The certified worker, certified as a health and safety expert by the government of Ontario, has not been allowed to inspect the scene of the fatal accident. As you know, this is a right that's guaranteed under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, subsection 8(14).

The Steelworkers were told by Dofasco, and I quote: "It's our property and our responsibility." Also, the union's representative has not been allowed to participate formally in the investigation. Minister, why is this happening and what are you going to do to stop it?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour):** As you know, the ministry is fully involved in this investigation, and I shall certainly take those issues under advisement and report back to you.

**Mr Christopherson:** I would hope the minister would ensure that that report back would include a response here in the House, because it's the public and workers in the public who are very concerned about this issue. I hope you'll respond in that fashion: here in the House.

My supplementary question is this: You can now appreciate, with this sort of thing happening in the province, the absolute need to strengthen the role of health and safety committees in the province and in the workplace, to strengthen the role of the certified worker, to strengthen the role of the committees and to ensure that all the legislation is strengthened, not weakened.

Everything we've heard from your government in terms of changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act says that you're going to deregulate responsibility back to the employer, that you're going to weaken the responsibility of committees, that you're going to weaken the role of the certified worker. Minister, I want your absolute assurance today that you will not do one thing

that weakens the right of those committees and those certified health and safety workers in the workplace, and I want you to do it now.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** It's unfortunate that the information you're receiving is so very wrong. As you know, I have repeatedly said in this House that our objective is to have among the safest workplaces those in the province of Ontario. That's why we are completely reviewing the Occupational Health and Safety Act. We will be taking a look at the role of the committees, we will be taking a look at the role of the workplace parties and we will be building on the internal responsibility system, which means the workplace parties will assume the responsibility for identifying hazards and making sure those workplaces are safe. This is a very significant step forward and it's one our government is going to do. We will have the safest workplaces.

1510

### MOTIONS

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** I move that the following substitution be made to the membership of the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly: Mr Clement be substituted for Mr O'Toole.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Does the motion carry? Carried.

**Hon David Johnson:** I move the following changes on the standing committee on administration of justice: Mr Chiarelli, Mr Crozier, Mr Ramsay —

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** I don't have a copy of that, Dave. I wasn't told about that; no agreement on that. I only have the first one.

**Hon David Johnson:** Mr Speaker, if I might make a note to the whip from the third party, I have just received a copy from the official opposition. These are all changes to deal with the official opposition. None of them are changes to deal with the government. If the official opposition has a list —

**The Speaker:** Just read the motion. Let's get on with it.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** You do have time. Why don't you just discuss it?

Okay. More motions, government House leader? No more motions?

### PETITIONS

#### HOTEL DIEU HOSPITAL

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** A timely petition from the people of St Catharines to the government of Ontario:

"Since the Hotel Dieu Hospital has played and continues to play a vital role in the delivery of health care services in St Catharines and the Niagara region; and

"Since Hotel Dieu has modified its role over the years as part of a rationalization of medical services in St



Catharines and has assumed the position of a regional health care facility in such areas as kidney dialysis and oncology; and

"Since the Niagara region is experiencing underfunding in the health care field and requires more medical services and not fewer services; and

"Since Niagara residents are required at present to travel outside of the Niagara region to receive many specialized services that could be provided in city hospitals and thereby not require local patients to make difficult and inconvenient trips down our highways to other centres; and

"Since the Niagara hospital restructuring committee used a Toronto consulting firm to develop its recommendations and was forced to take into account a cut of over \$40 million in funding for Niagara hospitals when carrying out its study; and

"Since the population of the Niagara region is older than that in most areas of the province and more elderly people tend to require more hospital services;

"We, the undersigned, request that the government of Ontario keep the election commitment of Premier Mike Harris not to close hospitals in our province, and we call upon the Premier to reject any recommendation to close Hotel Dieu Hospital in St Catharines."

I affix my signature as I'm in complete agreement with this particular petition.

#### WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Mike Harris government is attacking workers' compensation benefits and the rights of injured workers; and

"Whereas Tory plans include taking \$15 billion from injured workers and giving \$6 billion to employers, including the government's rich corporate friends; and

"Whereas Cam Jackson, the former Minister without Portfolio with responsibility for gutting the WCB, refused to hold public hearings, choosing to meet secretly with business and insurance industry representatives; and

"Whereas the WCB has about \$7.6 billion in assets and its unfunded liability has been steadily shrinking; and

"Whereas the Jackson report and WCB legislation are just part of a coordinated attack on occupational health and safety protections for working families in Ontario; and

"Whereas Tory plans also include abolition of the internationally respected Occupational Disease Panel; and

"Whereas the government needs to hear the message that taking money from injured workers and lowering incentives for employers to make workplaces safer is not the way to make Ontario a better place to live;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to hold full, province-wide public hearings on WCB reform; to listen to the voice of the people calling for improved occupational health and safety protection; and to tell the Tory government to call off its attack on the dignity and standard of living of injured workers and their families."

This is signed by residents of Sudbury East. I agree with the petitioners and I have affixed my signature to it.

#### ST MARYS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth):** I have a petition from the community action committee for St Marys Memorial Hospital.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and the Minister of Health:

"Whereas St Marys Memorial Hospital is critically important to the St Marys area from both health and economic perspectives,

"We petition to support the continuation of St Marys Memorial Hospital with active chronic beds and 24-hour emergency services to effectively serve the St Marys and area community."

It's signed on nine pages, about 30 on a page.

#### NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I have affixed my signature.

#### ONTARIO CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTE

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I have a petition to the Legislature and to the Honourable Robert Runciman, Solicitor General.

"Whereas we, the undersigned, believe that helping reduce crime and abuse in our communities is our responsibility as employees of the Ministry of Correctional Services, as professionals in related fields and as concerned citizens;

"Whereas closing institutions which provide specialized services to women and treatment to men does not achieve that goal;

"Whereas physical, emotional and sexual abuse is often transmitted from one generation to the next, with tremendous cost to society;

"Whereas treatment aimed at breaking that cycle must include the abuser so that another generation of children is not raised with the same destructive lessons;

"Whereas, as Mr Ross Virgo has stated, the Ontario Correctional Institute is 'a therapeutic community known around the world for their techniques';



"Whereas research statistics support anecdotal evidence that we are effective in changing abusive behaviour;

"Therefore, since a therapeutic community cannot exist in a superprison, we urge the government to save the victims and money by keeping what works."

I'm proud to affix my signature.

#### LAKE HURON FISHERY

**Mrs Barbara Fisher (Bruce):** I'd like to present a petition on behalf of some of the constituents within the riding of Bruce, and it reads as follows:

"To the Parliament of Ontario:

"Whereas the government's objective for fisheries on Lake Huron is to manage the aquatic resources of Lake Huron to ensure the long-term sustainability of a healthy ecosystem; and

"Whereas the attainment of this objective is based on the preservation and restoration of habitat and the control of exploitation of fish populations; and

"Whereas dedicated conservationists from the Ministry of Natural Resources have worked hard for many decades towards the achievement of this goal; and

"Whereas the fishery on Lake Huron rebounded from the demise of several decades ago to a relatively healthy fishery producing millions of dollars annually to the Ontario economy; and

"Whereas the rehabilitation and management of this important fishery is in jeopardy due to uncontrolled aboriginal commercial fishing; and

"Whereas negotiations to resolve this issue have been largely ineffective,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario government immediately resolve the fisheries management crisis on Lake Huron and ensure conservation of the fishery."

I will be pleased to affix my name to this petition.

#### MANDATORY INQUESTS

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This petition is to the Honourable Solicitor General and Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Progressive Conservative government of Ontario has decided to scrap mandatory inquests as a result of fatalities in the mining and construction industry; and

"Whereas this unprecedented and callous decision sets workplace safety back 20 years;

"We, the undersigned, request that Solicitor General Bob Runciman, on behalf of all workers in the mining and construction industry, reverse his decision to remove mandatory inquests from the Coroners Act of Ontario."

I affix my signature to this petition as I agree with it.

1520

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition from the Ontario Federation of Labour to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Harris government has begun a process to open the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario; and

"Whereas this act is the single most important piece of legislation for working people since it is designed to protect our lives, safety and health while at work and allow us to return home to our families in the same condition in which we left; and

"Whereas the government has made it clear that they intend to water down the act and weaken the rights of workers under the law, including the right to know, the right to participate and especially the right to refuse; and

"Whereas this government has already watered down proper training of certified committee members;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario not to alter the Occupational Health and Safety Act or erode the rights of workers any further and ensure strict enforcement of the legislation."

Given the events recently in Hamilton, I wholeheartedly support this petition.

#### BEAR HUNTING

**Mr W. Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew):** I'm presenting this petition concerning the spring bear hunt on behalf of the Honourable Bob Runciman. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas bears are hunted in the spring after they have come out of hibernation; and

"Whereas about 30% of the bears killed in the spring are female, some with cubs; and

"Whereas 80% of orphaned cubs do not survive the first year; and

"Whereas 95.3% of the bears killed by non-resident hunters and 54% killed by resident hunters are killed over bait; and

"Whereas Ontario still allows the limited use of dogs in bear hunting; and

"Whereas bears are the only large mammals hunted in the spring; and

"Whereas there are only six states in the United States which still allow a spring hunt; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals hunted over bait;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to amend the Game and Fish Act to prohibit the hunting of bears in the spring and to prohibit the use of baiting and dogs in all bear hunting activities."

This petition is signed by people from various parts of the province.

#### EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislature of Ontario.

"Whereas the Harris government has enacted a variety of policies which will negatively affect the rights of Ontario's workers; and

"Whereas the proposed elimination of protections contained within the Employment Standards Act will

further erode the basic protection afforded to working people in this province;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario reverse the unfair practices that have resulted in reduced protection and support for workers in this province and, in particular, that the proposed changes to the Employment Standards Act be withdrawn."

I support the petitioners and I will affix my signature to the petition.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** A further petition regarding occupational health and safety and its importance in the province of Ontario:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of workers for many years; and

"Whereas the centre and clinics have made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health and safety and the reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"Further we, the undersigned, demand that the education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

I add my name in support of this cause.

#### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mrs Barbara Fisher (Bruce):** Before reading this petition, I'd like to pre-empt it by saying that this was dated prior to the arrival of the new Minister of Health and therefore reads to the past minister's name. It's a petition to the Parliament of Ontario.

"Whereas the Honourable Jim Wilson, Minister of Health, has announced an 18% reduction to the health system which would result in major cuts to hospital services, reductions in medical/surgical beds and possible closures of hospitals; and

"Whereas the future of the hospitals within Huron county are currently under review by the Huron-Perth District Health Council; and

"Whereas many residents of Bruce county are served by Wingham and District Hospital and would be directly impacted by the decisions of the Huron-Perth District Health Council,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the citizens of Bruce county realize there are to be cuts and reductions to health care; and

"Whereas restructuring and financial responsibility can be accomplished without direct hospital closures,

"Be it hereby resolved that the citizens of Teeswater and Culross township care about their hospitals and hereby implore the Honourable Jim Wilson, Minister of Health, to give every consideration to ensure that the reductions to health care not result in the closure of any hospital in our area."

I affix my name to the top.

#### LIQUOR CONTROL BOARD OF ONTARIO

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as well.

"Whereas the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario is considering the privatization of the Liquor Control Board of Ontario,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Liquor Control Board of Ontario remain a crown corporation because we fear that the privatization of that organization will lead to increases in crime, drunk driving, alcohol abuse and its health costs as well as loss of control over availability to minors and quality of product."

I affix my name to this petition as I agree with it.

#### PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition from the United Paperworkers International Union, Local 665, in Terrace Bay.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Mike Harris government is rolling back the clock on workers' health and safety and occupational disease; and

"Whereas before the Occupational Disease Panel was established the Workers' Compensation Board dragged its feet for decades in acknowledging evidence that work was responsible for many diseases; and

"Whereas the independent Occupational Disease Panel's work is respected internationally; and

"Whereas a leaked cabinet document shows that Labour Minister Elizabeth Witmer is planning to abolish the Occupational Disease Panel, ending this independent voice and giving the responsibility back to the WCB; and

"Whereas the government needs to hear from the people of Ontario that taking money away from workers with occupational diseases is not the way to make Ontario a better place to live,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to hold full, province-wide public hearings on WCB reform; to listen to the voice of the people calling for preservation of the Occupational Disease Panel; and to tell the Tory government to call off its attack on the dignity and standard of living of injured workers and their families."

I add my name to theirs in support of this cause.



1530

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### SCHOOL CLASS SIZES ACT, 1997

#### LOI DE 1997 SUR LA TAILLE DES CLASSES SCOLAIRES

Mr Bartolucci moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 110, An Act respecting the number of pupils that may be enrolled in a school class / Projet de loi 110, Loi concernant le nombre d'élèves pouvant être inscrits dans une classe scolaire.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion please say "aye."

Those opposed please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please. Come to order. Would you like to give an explanation?

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** I'd like to thank the assembly for accepting first reading of a private member's bill, which is by all accounts customary. Certainly we know there's a backbencher in the government side who has trouble understanding that. But this act is entitled the School Class Sizes Act and this bill limits the number of pupils who may be enrolled in any class in any school anywhere in Ontario.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### FEWER SCHOOL BOARDS ACT, 1997

#### LOI DE 1997 RÉDUISANT LE NOMBRE DE CONSEILS SCOLAIRES

Mr Snobelen moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 104, An Act to improve the accountability, effectiveness and quality of Ontario's school system by permitting a reduction in the number of school boards, establishing an Education Improvement Commission to oversee the transition to the new system, providing for certain matters related to elections in 1997 and making other improvements to the Education Act and the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 / Loi de 1997 visant à accroître l'obligation de rendre compte, l'efficacité et la qualité du système scolaire ontarien en permettant la réduction du nombre des conseils scolaires, en créant la Commission d'amélioration de l'éducation, chargée d'encadrer la transition vers le nouveau système, en prévoyant certaines questions liées aux élections de 1997 et en apportant d'autres améliorations à la Loi sur l'éducation et à la Loi de 1996 sur les élections municipales.

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** Madam Speaker, Ontarians have long understood the importance of education to the wellbeing of this province. It's a passport to opportunity for the individual student growing up in a rapidly changing world and it's a vital factor in determining how well Ontario will

succeed in an increasingly complex and competitive global economy.

Last year alone, Ontarians spent more than \$13 billion on elementary and secondary school education. Taxpayers have always demanded accountability in public spending. They want reassurance that their tax dollars are being used wisely and that they are getting the best possible return on that investment.

As I noted on Monday, this is not a new issue. In fact, some 150 years ago the citizens of Toronto were already raising doubts about the rising costs of education and how effectively their tax dollars were being spent.

Today I'm delighted to open debate on second reading of the Fewer School Boards Act, 1997, which will respond to these long-standing concerns. The legislation we're debating today is part of a comprehensive package of government reforms that have been announced this week. Through it, we are going to streamline the way education in Ontario is financed and governed. As a result, residential property taxpayers will no longer be required to bear the costs of education. I am sure this will be a great relief to residential property taxpayers, particularly senior citizens, who for too long have been singled out to carry the burden of funding education through their property taxes.

Over the last 10 years, school boards have increased residential property taxes by an average of 5% in each and every year. If these trends continued, residential property taxpayers would be paying \$6.2 billion more for education by the year 2000. Effective 1998, these funds will be provided through provincial grants, not through residential property taxes.

The public is becoming more and more critical of school boards that have demonstrated little control over their spending habits. In the period between 1985 and 1995, for example, total student enrolment rose by some 16%, while board spending increased by 82%. During that same period, residential property owners saw the educational component of their residential taxes jump by more than 120%.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: This is a very important bill and the government has not kept quorum.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Is there a quorum?

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. Minister of Education.

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** This is a very important bill and I'm glad we do have quorum.

As I was saying, during the period that I've mentioned, residential property taxpayers in the province watched their taxes jump by 120%. In 1996, 78% of Ontario's school boards, rather than trimming their budgets to find a 1.8% efficiency, chose instead to increase residential property taxes; 29 of those boards increased property taxes by more than 3%.

Taxpayers are also questioning what they're getting in return for an ever-increasing tax bill. Many people point to the elaborate administrative centres that school boards have built as an all-too-visible reminder of a system that



has little or no public accountability. In my riding, for example, two of these monuments to school board spending face each other across a single intersection. Some of these board buildings have opulent adornments, including waterfall walls and terrazzo floors. One board that I know of also has an ownership interest in a golf course. Residential taxpayers can't afford and shouldn't be expected to pay for these questionable costs that are routinely demanded by school boards.

The government is committed to putting an end to this practice. We will require that business taxes continue to support effective and accountable funding of the education system. But I want to make it clear that we have rejected the idea of pooling. These taxes will remain in the community from which they were generated. Beginning in 1998, municipalities will collect this money and then forward it to the local school boards.

These reforms are based on extensive consultation with the people of this province that has involved 24 separate reviews on finance and governance since 1950, including royal commissions, committees, fact-finding reports, panels and innumerable meetings. Each time parents have expressed their concerns about the quality of their children's education and the way in which education dollars are being spent. They say they can't get straight answers on their children's education.

It's time to take action. Through the Fewer School Boards Act we are moving forward with the much-needed reform of the education system. We are streamlining the structure of the system and refocusing resources on the classroom, where they belong.

According to the report on school board spending, 1995-96, which I released earlier this month, there are significant discrepancies in how boards spend their resources. Some devote up to 73% to the classroom, others as little as 51%. This report found that on average, for every dollar spent on the classroom, more than 80 cents was spent outside the classroom. Clearly this situation cannot continue if we are going to give every student in this province an opportunity to excel. Non-classroom spending must be reduced in order to maximize the resources that are focused on our classrooms.

Through the Fewer School Boards Act we will be streamlining the administrative overhead by cutting the number of major school boards in Ontario in half, from about 129 to 66, and replacing them with new district school boards, effective January 1, 1998. Where possible the district boards will follow municipal boundaries. We will be retaining the small, isolate and hospital boards as school authorities.

After this reform the province will have 55 English-language school boards, down from 125, and 11 French-language school boards, which will replace the confusing array of 71 existing boards, sections of boards and advisory committees. These changes will respect all constitutional rights and they will respect the tradition of local control and decision-making.

We are also committed to improving the quality of education at less cost to the taxpayer. To do that we'll develop a new, fair model for distributing funding to ensure a high quality of education that meets all students' individual needs regardless of where they live. The new

funding model will be based on work conducted by the Working Group on Education Finance Reform, which was composed of key stakeholders, including representatives of teachers' federations, provincial school boards associations and Metro-area school boards. Its principles and features have already been presented in the consultation paper, *Meeting Students' Needs*, that we released in September. We've received tremendous response to this consultation paper and we'll be incorporating that input into our new model.

This new funding model will provide funds to recognize the cost of educating students, including special circumstances such as students learning in English for the first time, students with special needs and students in remote communities. As such it will respond to the concerns of urban boards such as Metropolitan Toronto, which are the largest recipients of new immigrants not only to Ontario but to Canada, and of smaller boards such as the Kirkland Lake-Timiskaming District Roman Catholic Separate School Board, which must meet the high costs of transportation and heating.

We'll be releasing a full and detailed proposal for the new funding model later this winter. The model will outline the approach we intend to take and will identify those issues upon which we'd like some advice, but I can assure you the new funding model, because it is based on the needs of students, will help to refocus our resources back in the classroom.

**1540**

Through this legislation, we are also redefining the role of the school board trustee. We want to restore trustees to their traditional and effective role as guardians of local education. This legislation provides the mechanisms through which we will reduce the number of politicians in education by cutting the number of trustees at major boards from almost 1,900 to approximately 700.

The Metropolitan Toronto district board, due to its size, will have up to 22 trustees. All others in the province will have between five and 12 trustees. The number and geographic distribution of trustees for the individual boards will be based on population and density tables that we will set out in regulation.

The legislation also clarifies who is eligible to serve as a trustee. We want to get away from the situation where those elected to serve on a board are unable to adequately represent their constituents and participate in decision-making on key issues because of potential conflicts of interest. Through this legislation, school board employees and their spouses will no longer be able to serve as a trustee in any school board or school authority in Ontario. Running for office will be permitted only if the employee takes a leave of absence.

In addition, we'll be taking steps to control trustees' salaries. They will no longer be able to take home up to the equivalent of a full-time salary, some more than \$49,000 a year. Instead, school boards will have the option to provide an honorarium of up to \$5,000.

The trustee's role now will be to provide policy, direction and support, not to be the hands-on, day-to-day managers in the schools. By clarifying that role, we are allowing teachers and principals to once again take responsibility for the operation of their schools. They will



now be assured that they will have the resources they need to teach the curriculum and that grants will address their students' individual needs, such as English as a second language.

Finally, to make sure that these reforms take place in an organized and careful way, this legislation will establish a commission that will work with the local community, including trustees, classroom teachers, parents and other stakeholders in the education community to guide the process of change.

These are not revolutionary ideas; in fact governments of all political stripes throughout Canada have already embarked on similar reforms. A report commissioned for the second national consultation on education in 1996 noted that jurisdictions are reforming education by promoting parental involvement in education; reducing the number of school boards, while expanding the use of school councils; renewing curriculum to focus on what students should know or be able to do; providing greater accountability to parents and the general public by instituting assessment tools based on a standard curriculum.

The legislation you have before you is proof that Ontario will no longer sit on the sidelines as others move ahead. Through the Fewer School Boards Act, we are continuing to fulfil the pledge that this government made to parents. We are providing them with the information and opportunities they need to resume their role as full partners in the education of their children. We are giving parents a greater direct voice in education by mandating that each school must have an advisory school council. These councils will have influence on key issues related to the school programs, codes of discipline and feedback on student achievement.

We are publishing annual reports so that parents and taxpayers can monitor and evaluate their school board's performance by seeing clearly where education dollars are being spent. The hallmarks of Ontario's new education system will be high standards and accountability. Our standards will be clear, measurable and comprehensive in all grades, and the new revised curriculum will be the same across the province. Our new curriculum for grades 1 to 9 will be released in the coming months. This rigorous and demanding new curriculum, focusing on language, math, science and technology, is the first stage in building a complete curriculum that provides a solid foundation in the basics.

We have already increased funding on new information technology in the classroom through a \$40-million investment in the technology incentive partnership program, which will focus particularly on the early grades.

We have completed consultations on secondary school reform, one of the most ambitious ever on education in this province. More than 20,000 individuals and groups were involved, and their input will form the basis of this government's decisions on the structure and content of secondary schools in the province. The new four-year program will be implemented for students entering grade 9 in September 1998.

We have established the Education Quality and Accountability Office, which will begin regular province-

wide testing of students this year, so parents will know whether their child has learned what is expected. Standard report cards will be issued by this fall to allow parents to see clearly how well their child is doing. This year we'll also be publishing our own report card and asking the public and parents to grade our efforts. That's the best way to make this system more accountable.

We are meeting our pledge. The Fewer School Boards Act is an important step in bringing accountability back into the education system, but we are doing more: We are reforming the education system to ensure our children have a solid foundation upon which to build their lives, a foundation upon which Ontario's future prosperity depends. This government's action will ensure that Ontario students will not be left behind.

**The Acting Speaker:** Are there questions and comments on the minister's speech?

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** The minister began the introduction of this debate with the statement, "Ontarians have long understood the importance of education to the wellbeing of this province." I agree with that. I think it's only too bad, perhaps tragic, that the minister and his government do not have a similar understanding of the importance of education to the wellbeing of this province.

The only part of the minister's introductory statement that has any relevance to the bill he is presenting today is his repeated concern about costs, his constant and now repeated efforts to dump on school trustees across this province, to point to trustees' apparent lack of responsibility in controlling what he considers to be spiralling education costs.

It is part of the minister's inability to want to paint whole pictures that he does not make any mention of the fact that over recent years education costs have been progressively dumped on to the local taxpayer and therefore have become the responsibility of school boards, that the province has paid less and less of a share of educational costs and that school trustees indeed have faced the very difficult decisions of knowing how to cope with those cuts, manage taxes in a way which is responsible, fair and realistic and still preserve a quality of education for the students in their schools.

The minister seems to have no appreciation of the kind of role that school trustees have played in this province. The minister chooses to use only bits and pieces of information. This has been a consistent pattern with this minister, using bits and pieces of information that he can then use to distort the picture being given so that taxpayers and citizens will have a very different picture of educational spending and the realities of where educational dollars are spent, all to serve a clearly predetermined political and personal agenda of this minister and a political agenda of a government which has one goal and one goal only, that is, to somehow, however desperately, find the means to pay —

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you very much. The member's time has expired.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. This is two-minute responses.

**Mrs McLeod:** Oh, I'm sorry, Madam Speaker. I'm getting into my debate.



**The Acting Speaker:** It was a very good two-minute response, and in a few minutes you'll have the opportunity to continue.

Further questions or comments?

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** I want to say to the former leader of the Liberal Party that that was a great two-minute response. I look forward to hearing the other 90 minutes.

For the benefit of those people who may be in the gallery or indeed watching who expected that we would be debating Bill 103 or doing other things this afternoon, we should point out that we are debating Bill 104, the education bill.

The reason that is happening is because we finally seem to have gotten somewhere with respect to the government understanding the importance of the issues before us and at least being prepared — though I'll believe it when I see it — under Bill 103 to have the referendum process unfold first and then deal with the bill here only after that has happened.

1550

But let me come back to Bill 104, because here too we see many similarities with the issues we have been raising under Bill 103. Here too there was a very clear promise made by this government, which was that it would protect classroom spending, and we know that what's behind this education bill is a fundamental breach of that very important promise. The minister can cut it every which way he wants, but until and unless he's prepared to stand up and answer the question he's so far refused to answer, which he was asked again when he put forward this legislation and this proposal, that is, will he guarantee that the present amount of funding being spent on education will continue to be spent on education — he's refused to answer that.

We know that what this is about is taking about \$1 billion out of the school system of this province. At the end of the day, you can't get that kind of money without cutting in the classroom.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** I'm pleased to rise today and respond to the minister's opening statement on Bill 104. I know just how hard the minister has worked to improve the quality, accountability and accessibility of education in Ontario right from the very beginning, with Bill 34, and right through the public discussions on education reform and education finance reform. It has come together with Bill 104, which is indeed a great first step.

I know the boards of education in my riding of Durham East, in fact all of Durham in the Northumberland and Clarington Board of Education, are very pleased. In fact, the directors have called me personally, Grant Yeo and Dick Malowney —

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** Give me names. Send them over.

**Mr O'Toole:** Give you names? Grant Yeo, Dick Malowney. They're very satisfied with these changes. They're satisfied and are prepared to work with the minister in the restructuring of education and the refocusing of education to the classroom.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Fort York, come to order.

**Mr O'Toole:** I think fewer school boards and more parent involvement are exactly what the people of Ontario want. I've heard it from the parent advisory committees in my riding. I've attended many of them, and I know they're supportive of these changes. They want a voice. Not just parents but grandparents, all citizens in the community, want to be involved. That's what we're looking for: the opportunity to be involved.

School councils are the way to go. Accessibility and accountability are clear. This is part of the strategy, as is the focus on quality in the classroom, starting with the basics: language, math, science and technology. Clearly the minister is right on track. That's what I've heard from the parent councils. That's what I've heard from students. After all, this is about students.

The standardized testing and standardized report card are what everybody wants. The students want to know how they're doing, the parents want to know how they're doing, and so do the teachers.

I commend the minister for his statement today. I think he's on track, on side, and I intend to support and argue for this bill throughout the week.

**Mr Marchese:** I want to take this two-minute opportunity to tell the public what this is all about, because I know the minister won't speak to this. He's going to babble about other stuff but certainly not about the real agenda.

This minister and this government have assaulted teachers in particular, have assaulted trustees by demeaning the meaningful role they have played over the years. He has assaulted the role of superintendents in school boards, he has assaulted the role of principals in school boards, assaulted the role of consultants, educational assistants and caretakers and the role they play in the educational system — demeans them.

What this bill is all about when it's titled the Fewer School Boards Act is to play to that feeling out there of the people who perhaps are not actively involved in education, that by somehow eliminating a few school boards and eliminating some trustees or many trustees and/or diminishing their salary, in some places a great deal, he thinks he's going to be able to get away with the real agenda, which is that this minister and this government want to take billions out of the educational system to finance their income tax cut. That is the bottom line. That is the real agenda of this government and that's what it's about.

Taking education out of the property tax system to replace it with something of equivalent value is nothing but the giving of control of finances to this minister and to this government so they can take away not just \$1 billion from our boards of education and our educational system, but more. I predict that by the end of this it's going to be an assault on teachers and students, and I predict it will be taking away \$2 billion in the next year to year and a half. That's what it's about.

**The Acting Speaker:** Minister of Education, you have two minutes to sum up.

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I want to thank everyone who has contributed to the debate so far today and who will continue to do so. I take exception to a couple of things that have been said. I know that will surprise you.



For one, the member for Fort William talked about the downloading of costs to the local boards. The member opposite's party promised to have the province take on a larger responsibility for the funding of education; so by the way did the third party. They both failed to fulfil their promise. This government will not. This government will finally take a senior responsibility for funding the needs of every student across the province, because fundamentally everyone in Ontario understands that it's the only fair way to make sure there's a high quality of education for every student in the province and that every student's needs will be met.

The member for Dovercourt quoted me I think inaccurately. Let me just make sure I have said clearly to him what our promise is to the people of Ontario and to the students of Ontario: We will provide sufficient funding to meet the needs of every single individual student in this province so that every student has a high quality of education. While other governments may have measured their success in the education system by how much money they could waste —

**Mr Marchese:** You measure it by —

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Fort York, come to order.

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** — our government measures success in education by one measurement only, and that is high student achievement by every student in our system, by every student across Ontario. This is the first step down a path to that high level of student achievement that our students deserve and that our parents and taxpayers pay for.

**The Acting Speaker:** Now it's time for further debate.

**Mrs McLeod:** Madam Speaker, as you can tell, I'm more than eager to participate in this debate and more than eager to do my part in attempting to expose the deception that is being perpetrated on the citizens of this province by this government over the course of the past week.

The deception that's being perpetrated begins with the actual title of this bill. The title has been spruced up in the final copy. I note that the minister used the old original title — perhaps they forgot to tell him it didn't have exactly the right political ring, so they spruced it up a bit. The actual title of the bill, as it was introduced, is that it's "An Act to improve the accountability." This bill has nothing to do with improving accountability. In fact, this bill significantly reduces local accountability and any electoral accountability for education at all. That is clear in what this bill does.

It says it's an act to "improve...effectiveness." There is nothing in this bill that speaks to effectiveness of education at all. There is nothing in this bill in fact that speaks to effectiveness of the spending on education. In the course of this debate, I think I can bring forward sufficient evidence of that statement.

It says it's an act that will improve the "quality of Ontario's school system." There is certainly nothing in this bill — I defy any member of this Legislature to read through this bill to find anything in this bill at all that speaks to the quality of education, anything in this bill at all that says anything about students and the wellbeing of students and the kind of education that students should be

able to get in schools in every community across this province.

This bill is not about improving education; this bill is not about better education; this bill is not about students and their needs. This bill isn't even about parent involvement. The whole idea of more parent involvement is something that's going to come later. That will be another bill, if it takes a bill. It's something that's going to come in the spring, we're told by the ministry, because they haven't really worked out the role of the parent councils. That's one of the jobs that's going to be given to something called the Education Improvement Commission, yet another independent, non-elected body being given incredible powers by a government that can't solve its own problems and wants to wash its hands of any responsibility for the very fundamental change it's bringing into this province.

The old title of the bill, the one the minister used today when they forgot to tell him that the bill actually had a new and formal name, really says it all. This is the Fewer School Boards Act. That's all this is about. This is about reducing the numbers of trustees and reducing the numbers of school boards and it serves one very particular purpose: to get out a political message. It serves a purpose of camouflaging what was to come in what the Conservatives called their mega-week last week and it serves a purpose of paving the way for taking control of educational funding so that the minister and the Harris government can cut the spending on education, and that will have very dire consequences for kids in our classrooms.

That's really what this bill is all about in the long term, but you won't find anything written in the bill that actually speaks to that. That's why the purpose of this debate has to be to look at what is here and, more importantly, what is not here and what is to come.

1600

We have to put this bill in the context of when it was introduced, and our colleagues will all remember that this bill was introduced a week ago Monday. It was the first day of mega-week. It was the first day of announcements that began the most horrendous change in the way we are governed and the way the services that people in communities need, not just kids in schools but welfare recipients, sole-support parents, families needing child care, seniors needing long-term care, the psychiatrically disabled needing housing, the low-income people needing housing, the services for all those people, are going to be drastically affected by the kinds of changes that were introduced by this government during mega-week.

Almost all the changes that were announced Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday were bad news for people in every community, bad news for property taxpayers, bad news for municipal government, so the government strategy clearly was to have something on Monday that at least sounded like it was good news. They decided they would introduce something called the Fewer School Boards Act, because surely everybody agrees that having fewer politicians is a good idea.

It seemed to work for the government when they decided to have fewer provincial politicians, so it should work for the government when they decide to have fewer



municipal politicians, whether it's creating the great megacity of Toronto with its total loss of local accountability or having fewer school boards and school trustees with less and less accountability for educational decision-making. But it all fits. It's fewer politicians, and doesn't everybody think that's an easy political sell? That's all the government was looking for a week ago Monday, something that would be an easy political sell. That's really what this was all about.

Maybe it is a political sell that's quite easy. Maybe if you ask somebody, "Isn't having fewer politicians a good idea?" people would say: "Yes, sure, of course it's a good idea. What do those politicians do?" I see even a duly elected member of the Legislature on the opposite side nodding his head. If you don't think an elected representative has any legitimate role, why are you here and why are you drawing a salary? Some of us actually believe in democracy, some of us actually believe that elections serve a purpose and that a democratically elected representative is accountable as well as being accessible. I think when people ask the question, "Well, is having fewer politicians, including fewer school trustees, a good idea?" and they start asking what trustees do, what value there might be, it might not be quite such an easy political sell. You might find people saying: "What's going to happen to local decision-making? If we have these big mega-boards, what will happen to local decision-making? Are all the decisions going to be made out of Queen's Park?"

I'll tell you there's one thing the people in my community distrust more than any decision ever made by a school board or a local council: a decision made in Queen's Park that's imposed on my community. People will not accept this as good news if they know it means that all the decisions about the education of their kids are going to be made out of Queen's Park in the future.

I think people have a genuine concern about democracy, and they have seen it hit time and time again by this government. It seems almost incredible that it was a year ago this time that we were trying to fight Bill 26, which was the biggest affront to the democratic process this province or any jurisdiction has ever seen. Now here we are again: another attack on democracy, following several others in the meantime. Does anybody care about that? I think the people of this province do. They think about what it means to have a locally elected group of people they can hold accountable for decisions, a group of people who are accessible to them so that if parents have concerns about what's happening to their children in their classrooms, then they can reach their school board, they can take their concerns to somebody that's accessible.

I think people worry about that. I think they worry about who they can hold accountable for decisions that they think are wrong. If the quality of education is harmed by the actions of this government, whom do they go to? Whom do they take their concerns to? Thinking people out there, if they can get past the spin the government put on its mega-week, or attempted to put on its mega-week, will have some real concerns about whether all this change in governance, this loss of accountability, this loss of accessibility, this loss of local decision-

making, really saves any money at all. I think people will then say, "Why is this being done?"

It's being done — the most obvious reason — because the government needed to appear to be doing something that people would agree with last week, that they would agree with at least until they ask questions and find out there are no answers to their questions, because all of this, this Fewer School Boards Act that now has a glossier title to make it look a little better, was thrown together in time to support the political message of mega-week.

I think we have to take each of the questions that should be asked about this seemingly good-news bill and we have to look at how the government answers or avoids answering the significant questions. The first, maybe most significant question is, why indeed are you doing this? The government will say they're doing it because they want to save money that's being spent on education that the minister has somehow decided is wasteful spending.

We heard him today describe spiralling costs as if the dollars that are being used are not dollars that are going to support education for our children. We've heard him say repeatedly that his goal is to ensure that the dollars that are spent on education go to the classroom. Who could possibly disagree with that in principle? But that is not what is happening with this bill and it's certainly not what is happening with this bill put in the context of the government taking over the control of educational funding while it dumps \$1 billion more, in excess of what it has taken off the property taxes, back on to the property taxes.

The government says that with its budget of about \$14 billion for education, it thinks it could probably save \$150 million through amalgamating the school boards and creating these gigantic boards. Maybe it can save \$150 million if it creates these mega-boards. They've looked at several categories and they've had an Ernst and Young study that tells them they can save money in some areas.

There are a couple of obvious areas that the government would target, that everybody would expect the government to target, as it looks for justifying this move by saying it's going to save money on non-classroom education. It looks at some savings for directors of education if you have fewer directors of education. It looks at some minimal savings, \$2.5 million, on senior supervisory officers. Those may well be savings that are realized, although it seems like a rather small amount of money in an overall budget of \$14 billion, given the kinds of losses of local accountability and accessibility that we're going to pay for that saving.

I also have some questions in my mind about the assumptions the ministry makes in coming up with even less than \$10 billion worth of savings that it's identified in administrative savings, because we've seen them consistently, for the last 18 months, use outdated information to talk about the size of administrative costs in Ontario. We've seen them grossly exaggerate the percentage of school board budgets that are spent on administration. We know the reality is that over the last few years, as boards have had to cope with cuts, the first place they cut, naturally, is going to be in administration. Anybody



who has any responsibility for spending dollars for education wants to be sure that those dollars go to classroom education and the support for student learning that is basic for everybody who has ever had anything to do with educational budgets. So what's the first place to get cut? You start with administration in the hope that you can cut down on overhead costs and keep those precious dollars for kids and for junior kindergarten and for special education.

We know that over the last few years administrative costs have come down and are accounting for less than 5% of the total education spending in Ontario.

Maybe you can still say it's something less than \$10 million, as the ministry assumes, on administrative costs with amalgamation, but that remains to be seen, and maybe there are some boards that are well above the average, and maybe there should have been some guidelines put in place by the ministry as to what constitutes responsible, accountable spending on administration, but I don't think you needed to change the entire nature of educational governance to bring about that kind of accountability.

1610

The government also suggests, in one of its categories of savings, that they'll be able to save a few million dollars on cutting the actual costs of school boards. That comes as a bit of a surprise because Mr Snobelen, the Minister of Education, in one of his more forthcoming moments — if I can restrict myself to acceptable parliamentary language — was meeting with a gathering of young Tories at the University of Western Ontario and I guess he felt he was among friends and might never be reported, so he could be a little more forthcoming in that setting than he normally is in the Legislature, and he did admit that board cuts were not likely to save big money. Nevertheless, he's decided to make that the primary area in which you're going to save money through the amalgamation of school boards.

This issue of the cost of school boards and school trustees has been visited numbers of times by numbers of commissions and studies. I think you'd have had all-party agreement, and probably agreement among almost all trustees in the province, as well as all citizens, if the government had taken the action of limiting the total number of trustees, reducing the total number of trustees on school boards, capping the salaries, so that in situations where maybe trustees were granting themselves honoraria that seemed larger than was warranted, there could be some limits put on that. But I believe that this minister has consistently used small exceptions to paint a picture which is not really a true picture of the costs of school trustees and the actual operation of our elected boards.

We also know that one of the things this minister has done very deliberately is to try to create that impression, that the spending, the \$150 million he says he is now going to be able to save, can all come out of non-classroom expenditures. He's tried to create a sense that billions of dollars are being spent on what he calls out-of-classroom costs, as if these out-of-classroom costs are all sort of wasteful, not really going to kids in a classroom and therefore they're dollars that are not being well spent.

So a week ago Friday, which was the Friday before he decided to introduce this bill, or planned to introduce this bill, he released yet another study which purported to back up the minister's claims that nothing less than \$6 billion was being spent on outside-the-classroom costs.

It is simply not the case that this report backs up the minister's contention that these dollars — the minister will say as much as 49% of our education dollars are spent outside the classroom. He uses the highest possible percentage the report gives him, because the report says something in the area of 25% to 49% of education dollars are spent outside the classroom. The minister prefers always to use the higher figure.

The report doesn't say this is spent solely on administrative costs. Out-of-classroom, non-classroom, has been defined by the ministry for its own particular purposes, to create this sense of waste dollars. But when you really look at what those out-of-classroom dollars are being spent on, it includes libraries. If you think libraries are a waste, let's talk about the role of libraries, let's have some discussion about that. Let's not just talk about libraries as an out-of-classroom expense which is somehow needless or wasteful and doesn't provide educational support to children.

Guidance is one of those. Yes, guidance provides support to students. Does it need to be done differently? Do there need to be changes? Let's talk about that. But don't lump it into some sort of category defining out-of-classroom expenses as if somehow those didn't relate to students.

Another of those costs in that \$6-billion was all the custodial and janitorial costs. Surely we don't think kids should go to schools that aren't being maintained and aren't being kept clean? How could any government or any minister throw custodial and janitorial costs into something that is then defined as "out-of-classroom" and they're somehow representative of the misspending on the part of school boards?

Preparation time — amazing, another one the government thinks is going to be a really easy one, a place where you can cut costs. I don't think they've really thought through what cutting preparation time may mean, not in cutting dollars, but in teacher layoffs and in putting the kinds of time pressures on school teachers that mean they're not going to do extra-curricular activities, and what that does to the curriculum that students are enjoying and what role extra-curricular activities play in a student's curriculum. All of this is just lumped into this mythical \$6 billion that the minister somehow wants to use as a figure to justify the fact that educational costs can be cut.

I think it's important today to go back specifically to the \$150 million that the government, the Ministry of Education, claims it can save by this particular bill, without getting to what else they're going to do with the rest of the \$6 billion down the road. Just what does it think it can do to find \$150 million? I've mentioned directors and senior supervisory officers. They also think they're going to save money on classroom supplies and equipment and on custodial and maintenance supplies, presumably through some efficiencies of scale. If the minister had been out talking to school boards for the last



18 months, he'd know that the cost-cutting that went on a year ago has forced school boards into economies of scale in their purchasing even if they hadn't been doing that beforehand. Saving dollars on instructional materials and equipment and custodial supplies means kids will have even fewer books than they have right now and schools will not be kept decently clean.

Another category where they're going to save money, \$1.3 million, to make up their \$150 million in savings is in something called "other instructional supports." It sounds nebulous enough to be something you can just throw away, no sweat — \$1.3 million adds to our \$150 million, makes it easy — except that "other instructional supports" includes professionals or paraprofessionals who provide support services to students or teachers. Ever been in an integrated classroom with special needs kids in the classroom? Have you seen the role that paraprofessionals play in providing support to students in that integrated classroom? Does anybody have any idea what taking out that \$1.3 million in professional and paraprofessional support services to students is going to mean? Does anybody really think that \$1.3 million is not a direct loss of service to kids? It clearly is. So don't pretend that that part of the \$150 million is going to be saved by amalgamating school boards.

The educator support program: You're going to save \$16.7 million of the \$150 million by cutting the educational program support. That's the group of people out in the school boards who develop curriculum. I'm not opposed to seeing the province do more curriculum support. I happen to believe that's important for parents' understanding of curriculum, for their satisfaction with it, for the ministry's and the province's ability to ensure some equivalency of standard across the province.

But I would ask the question of this minister: How many places can you cut curriculum support and have any curriculum support left? They have gutted the central Ministry of Education. That was part of their first round of cuts in order to try and make up the dollars they need for the tax cut. There's hardly anybody left to develop curriculum in the Queen's Park Ministry of Education. There's almost nothing left out in the regions in the Ministry of Education. So if they're going to save this \$16.7 million in educational curriculum support at the school board level, who is going to be left to develop any kind of curriculum in this province? The minister likes to talk about how this is going to improve quality and improve standards and give consistency. I suggest to you that if they keep cutting the same dollars time and time again, there will be no curriculum development, no standards, no consistency and no quality left in education in Ontario.

Another category, part of the \$150 million, minimal as that might seem in a \$14-billion budget, is transportation. They've assumed that 15% of the costs currently being incurred by boards being amalgamated can be saved through economies of scale in transportation. I've been a school trustee in a board that serves a large geographic rural area, and I can tell you right now that economies of scale in busing kids to school means rural kids being on buses as early as 6:30 in the morning. I don't think you can find economies of scale, and I certainly don't think

it's worth the \$4.3 million they're looking for to find economies of scale, in busing kids to school if it means five-year-olds are getting on buses before 6:30 in the morning.

1620

The last one I'll mention in this outline of where the ministry expects to save its \$150 million is on the capital spending by boards. The minister, once again in his effort to use bits and pieces of information in order to distort the true picture, has suggested that boards have built monuments across the province.

I want people to know that when they talk about saving capital spending at the board level, they're talking today about schools. They're talking about schools that need to be renovated and maintained. They're talking about new schools that need to be built in areas where there are too many kids in portables. They're talking about those very schools that this same ministry 10 days ago made one of its good-news announcements because they said they were going to build more schools. Now they're talking about saving capital costs as part of this \$150 million.

There is no way that even the \$150 million that they think to save with this Fewer School Boards Act is going to be realized without significant cuts that affect kids in a classroom. Let that be absolutely clear.

There's something else that the Ernst and Young report says. It's part of the consultants' report that the minister had done in order to back up his \$6-billion mythical cost. It's something the report says in addressing the reason why Ernst and Young was supposedly asked to look at educational spending, and that is, why does educational spending go up? Why is it higher in some boards than it is in other boards?

The report comes to a conclusion that is very significant for this piece of legislation. It comes to the conclusion that size is not a factor that is relevant to school board spending. Let me translate that, because what that says to me is that size is not relevant to spending, and therefore bigger is not necessarily better. And yet this whole bill is here, this whole change in governance, this whole loss of local decision-making and local access and local accountability is here, because the government says it wants to save money. I don't think they're going to save their \$150 million without hurting kids in the classroom, and their own consultants have said bigger boards don't necessarily save money.

Their own consultants said, and maybe they risked their next contract by being so forthright about it, that the ministry needs to go back and get a better understanding of why spending is higher in some boards than others, and they particularly have to look at spending that is beyond the board's control. They particularly expressed their concern about the numbers of special needs students who are in that board.

It is only too clear, when the government releases that report on Friday, ignores that piece of advice to go back and get a better understanding of what is making educational spending go up and brings out a report on Monday that totally ignores what their own report says, that they have no interest in really understanding where educational dollars are going, what makes up the bulk of educational



costs, and what price students, including special needs students, may have to pay for a government that is so hell-bent on finding the money it needs to pay for its tax cut.

There's something else, one other piece of evidence that comes out in a supplemental report by the same consultants at Ernst and Young. It's part of the report in which they outline where the ministry's assumptions are about finding \$150 million, but they also go on to say — and again I think it took some courage for the consultants to put in the note, because it clearly was not what the government wanted to hear. They wanted the consultants to say, "Yes, you can save \$150 million if you amalgamate school boards." They didn't want to hear what the consultants put in their covering letter, which is the statement that in fact with school board amalgamation, educational costs might go up. I didn't hear that mentioned when the minister introduced the bill, that this amalgamation may actually lead to increased costs for education, that the \$150 million they look to save may be offset by increased costs that come when you amalgamate boards, boards which have very different levels of spending on services and very different levels of commitments in their contracts.

The government had an answer to that, and maybe that's why they didn't bother to mention, when the minister introduced the bill, that amalgamation could actually cost more, that it wouldn't save money overall, that it would cost more. It's a little bit like, "Our changes last week were a wash," and lo and behold, you discover it's actually \$1 billion more for property taxpayers than it was when they started. Amalgamation may end up costing more.

The ministry said to consultants: "Don't worry about that, because we're going to do something else. We're not just going to amalgamate boards." They know there's no evidence anywhere by any study, that any commission sent out to look at amalgamating boards has come back and said, "We have no evidence that amalgamating boards is actually going to save money." They knew that. When Ernst and Young said to them in their report, "It could cost you more, you know; there's no evidence that you'll really save much more than this \$150 million, if you're even going to save that, but it could cost you more," they said: "Don't worry about that, because we're going to do something else. When we amalgamate boards we're also going to take education off the property tax. That will do two things. It will give us a good-news announcement, which we desperately need on Monday, but it will also allow us to take control of educational spending."

As the ministry says in its response to Ernst and Young, and this is in print, "We will then be able to control the costs." I think that is really what the agenda is. It is to get control of educational spending so it can cut what is spent on students' education in this province.

The government's first step? Make school boards useless. School trustees know a little bit too much. They understand local needs. They've got associations. They advocate for public education. They come and pester the minister and say: "We don't like your cuts. We don't like what you're doing to kids in our school systems. You

can't make those cuts without hurting kids, hurting junior kindergarten, hurting special education." Trustees are a nuisance — they get in the way of the government's agenda — so first of all you've got to make your school boards absolutely useless, and then you've got to take the educational cost off property taxes so the government controls the cost.

It serves an immediate political purpose for the government. Let's be absolutely clear about that. The immediate political purpose is that it gave the government the spin it needed on Monday. It was taking education off the property tax. My goodness, isn't that something all of us would like to have seen happen years and years ago? There isn't a single one of us who's looked at taxation in the province of Ontario and not believed that the province should be paying a higher percentage of educational costs. As the minister himself has said and previous governments have all said, "We would like to move up the provincial percentage of spending on education, have property tax pay less." In fact, what's happened over the last few years is that the province has paid less and less of a percentage and property taxes have paid more, so surely all of us should be happy because education is no longer on the property tax.

Let me be specific, though, because I think this is part of the myth that's out there: It's only the residential property taxpayer who's not paying education tax; business is still paying education property tax. The difference there is that the property tax for business is going to be set by Queen's Park, and that is the first time ever that Queen's Park is going to have direct property taxation ability, as a result of these changes.

But they wanted the spin so they can go out and say to residents: "We've taken education off your property taxes. Isn't this wonderful?" We heard the minister say that again today. Well, that is pure camouflage for what happened on Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday and Friday of last week as this government dumped billions and billions and billions of new costs on to property taxpayers across the province. There is no good news for property taxpayers, residential or otherwise. There certainly is no good news for business, which has all their educational taxes plus their share of everything that was dumped on municipalities on Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday and Friday. There is no good news for property taxpayers, because the net result of last week, the final total of mega-week, is that property taxes have to pay a net billion dollars more.

Madam Speaker, I'm not sure whether time is going to permit me to diverge from the educational bill and what they've done with education in order to spend time on my distress over what this government did last week and what for me is the sheer immorality, as well as the deception, of having dumped the costs for welfare and family benefits and child care and long-term care for seniors and social housing for the low-income and for the psychiatrically disabled on to the property tax base, a property tax base which we have all agreed is inequitable for the support of social services, a property tax base that we don't believe supports the role of equitable access to services for people no matter what community they happen to live in.



1630

All of us would have supported the province paying more of the share of education costs so there could be greater equity. None of us ever would have dreamt that in return for that the province would shift the most volatile, most explosive cost, the cost of supporting the most vulnerable in our communities, on to the base of the property tax. My God, David Crombie, who was sent out by this government to come back in with his recommendations on disentanglement, to tell them how to make things simpler, how to make government work better, said to them days before they made these sets of announcements: "Don't do this. It is wrong. It is a disaster. If the only way to take education off the property tax is to dump all the other costs of social programs on to municipalities and on to property taxpayers, don't do it. It is wrong. It is a disaster. It is the wrong direction." The government went ahead and did it anyway.

They started with the spin on Monday. They hoped that nobody would notice this wasn't a wash, that at the end property taxpayers were going to be left with \$1 billion in additional costs at the very minimum. They thought they'd be able to go out in the next election campaign and just say: "Look we're the ones who took education off your property tax. Isn't this great, and aren't you pleased?"

I don't think people are that dumb and I don't think they're going to have such short memories. I think they're going to see through the camouflage of the big dump; I think they're going to see through the cover of the big lie that property taxes are going to go down when in fact they're going to go up, unless, of course, services are devastated.

I believe that what happened last week in mega-week, and this bill is part of it, is without any question the most cynical deception that has ever been perpetrated by a government on the citizens of this province.

Having said that, I actually said that the intent of this bill does even more than that. I really believe that amalgamating school boards, making school boards essentially useless and taking over educational funding gives the province control over educational spending that is going to let them cut the dollars that are spent on education for our kids. This minister has made no secret of the fact that his goal, his personal goal, his measure of success in government, is to take \$1.2 billion out of educational spending. He has tried to camouflage the ways in which that can be done. He has tried to say it's going to be done through out-of-classroom expenditures; he has tried to say it's going to be done through cutting administrative costs. None of that washes, but the minister is left with his own personal goal of wanting to take \$1.2 billion out of educational spending.

They promised in the Common Sense Revolution document that they wouldn't touch classroom spending, and that's why the minister goes through such hoops in distorting the picture of where the educational dollars are actually spent. They want people to believe they're spent outside the classroom so they won't be seen to be breaking their promise not to touch classroom spending.

Then the government got nervous — cut \$400 million a year ago, were going to cut we thought another \$800

million. They got nervous because they heard people saying the cuts are already hurting kids in the classroom. They saw parents' groups organizing and coming to government, coming to Queen's Park and saying: "Stop this. Stop the cuts." They did their own polls and found out that people were concerned about what this government was doing to education. They found out that people are actually prepared to spend tax dollars on education because they truly see the benefit of education for the wellbeing not only of our children but of the future of this province.

So the government, which still wanted to cut, that needs to cut because they're missing \$3 billion to pay for the tax cut, the government that still needed to find big dollars and had to get them out of education, decided it somehow had to be a little bit more subtle about it. I don't think they've been subtle; I think they've been purely and simply deceptive.

The province says it is now going to pay 75% of the costs of education. You have to remember there is still commercial assessment for education, so the province is not paying 100% of education, it's paying 75%. They control 100% of spending and costs because they're going to levy the taxes on businesses, but the actual direct provincial contribution is going to be 75%. The question is, 75% of what? Is it going to be 75% of the total current budget for education which is about \$14 billion? We have no answers from the minister on that. There are absolutely no guarantees the province will be spending 75% of \$14 billion.

What happens now is that the province has a much bigger pot for its spending so it can cut big dollars and still say, "We're spending more on education than we were when the Common Sense Revolution document was written." That's deceptive because this government, I am convinced, is going to look for ways to take dollars out of education and that is going to have a very direct effect on education in our classrooms.

There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that education cuts are going to happen. They are going to hurt kids in the classroom. They are going to fundamentally violate, no matter how the government tries to spin it, an election promise that they would not touch classroom education. It is all going to be done because there is only one campaign promise this government holds sacred and that is the promise to cut income taxes by 30%. We have an irresponsible campaign promise based on absolutely no idea of how they could deliver it — faulty numbers — that is now going to lead to educational cuts as well as cuts in the most basic services in virtually every other area where government has traditionally delivered service, and to increase property taxes along with it all.

I can't be optimistic in any way. I can't give the government the benefit of the doubt in not believing that there are going to be educational cuts to come. We've seen this government's record on educational spending, we've seen the \$400 million that was actually more like \$1 billion in its impact on educational spending, and we've seen what happened when boards were faced with those kinds of cuts. Sure, they cut administration, they cut all those non-classroom areas which the minister seems to think is the panacea for reducing educational



costs, but they were also forced to make much more difficult decisions. There were boards that had to cut libraries; there were boards that cut special education programs; there were boards that cut guidance programs and music programs and physical education programs.

There were 25 boards that cut junior kindergarten. Where's junior kindergarten now? It's not going to be a board decision any longer; it's not going to be boards that have to struggle with how they're going to be able to maintain junior kindergarten even as their funding is cut. Those decisions are going to be made by the Ministry of Education and they're going to be made by a government that clearly does not believe there is any place for junior kindergarten. They cut the funding for junior kindergarten. They were quite prepared to let boards cut junior kindergarten as a way of not having to raise the property tax to keep kids in their junior kindergarten class. I think we can pretty much guess where junior kindergarten is going to be as this government takes control of educational funding.

There is so much I worry about. I worry about what's going to happen to special education programs. I worry about what's going to happen to special education programs, not just because of the government's spending cuts, which I fully believe are coming, but because special education parents are not going to have anybody they can come and talk to about the fact that their child's special education class has been lost or they can't get that para-professional support that lets that child be integrated in a class.

I really believe that boards are eventually going to disappear and there will be no locally elected body, no body with the accountability to be able to speak to those parents, or to those parents who are concerned about the lack of libraries or the loss of junior kindergarten.

1640

That's one of the other questions that we have to ask, one of the questions that underlies this bill that's in front of us today: Exactly what is going to happen?

I think one of the things that's going to happen is that the boards will clearly come to be seen to be virtually useless. The boards that this bill creates are simply too large to be effective in any way. If you look at the new Metropolitan Toronto mega-school board, I think the numbers of students that the board will be responsible for are three times as many as all of the students in the province of New Brunswick. As you know, the minister and the government have rather been inclined to hold up New Brunswick as a model because they eliminated school boards. They have said: "Why do we need school boards? The province of New Brunswick has done away with them altogether."

If you want to look at it just in terms of the size of the jurisdictions in Ontario, there is a fundamental difference between Ontario and New Brunswick, with Metro alone having three times as many students in its new mega-board as the entire province of New Brunswick.

If you want to look at the differences in geographic terms, come up to my part of the province; come up to northwestern Ontario. There are two new boards in northwestern Ontario, two mega-boards. We don't have huge numbers of students, but we have geographically in

each board an area larger than the country of France. Tell me how there's going to be any local accessibility in school boards serving an area larger than the country of France.

There will be communities in my part of the province that will not have a single trustee, because even if they allow some northern allowance, which they're talking about, there won't be enough trustees based on per capita to allow even a single representative for each of our communities.

Boards will be virtually useless because they won't have any taxing power. I don't want to come down to simplifications, but I've always been one of these people who believe in the idea of no taxation without representation. I guess if you turn that around, if you don't have taxation power, you have to wonder what the role is of an elected body and why you go through the electoral representative process. As it becomes more and more apparent that boards have no real power — no power for taxation, no power to respond to local needs with a local levy, no decision-making power because he who controls all of the dollars will control all of the decisions, and that will clearly be Queen's Park — you have to say, "Well, why have boards at all?"

If boards become useless and they disappear, what will happen clearly is that Queen's Park and the bureaucrats will be running education. Even in the short term, even when these big boards are still in operation, there will be no access for individuals, for those special education parents who want to come to their board and say, "We don't think what you're doing is right." There will be no place they can go to voice their local concerns and there will be no group of people who are really able to look at local needs and look at creative, innovative programs to respond to local needs.

I guess I go back too far, because I can remember the origins of some of the programs that are an integral part of our school systems today. I suppose they're part of the out-of-classroom stuff that this Minister of Education thinks can be thrown away in the name of saving dollars to pay for the tax cut. I still think that some of these programs are important, programs that have come from the community, from concerned parents and citizens who have come forward and said: "We think we should have an outdoor education program. We think that's important. We think we could do it in our area. We think we should have a family life program and we think we should develop one that works for our parents and our kids. We think we should have an instrumental music program because that's important to us." I don't think there's going to be any local flexibility for those kinds of local programs now.

The province says: "Well, don't worry about that because what's going to happen is that parent councils are going to take the place of school boards, so you'll still have local responsiveness and local accountability. It will be through the parent councils." I don't for one moment want to take away from the value of parent councils. I've been a strong supporter of parent councils. I believe we should encourage parents to be involved at every school, elementary and secondary. I think what we have in the parent councils that have developed are



knowledgeable and informed groups of parents and citizens, and they have proven time and time again to be our best advocates for the needs of students and for public education. The more parent councils, the better.

But I hear the parent councils saying: "We want to be advisory. We want to be advocates. We want to look at the needs in our school. We do not want to take on the responsibility of school trustees for the management of the schools." I could quote parent after parent who has said that this is not what they're looking for. Shelley Carroll, says that she comes to nearly every parent council at her children's two schools in North York. She spends 20 hours a week talking to other parents. She firmly believes in involvement, but she says, "Forget it" in terms of more parent power.

Carol Nixon from Ottawa, a mother of four who sits on an elementary school council — she's chair of the 83-school Carleton Assembly of School Councils — agrees with that and says: "We're comfortable with advisory powers. We're not comfortable with decision-making powers."

The Franklin school parents, whom we spent quite a bit of time with in the fall dealing with their concerns, are absolutely committed to education and to being advocates for their kids, but they don't want to be hiring principals and hiring teachers.

Even if the councils wanted to take on that responsibility, how would a system work? Would you have teachers having to apply to every single school in the province in order to be considered for a job? The system becomes unwieldy, it's unworkable, and I don't think it's been given any thought at all.

The other concern that's been raised is, who will advocate for kids with the government if school boards disappear? Will parent councils, which are supposed to take over this responsibility, form new associations so that they can advocate with the province, or is the minister's hope that parents won't be much of a nuisance any longer? After all, there will be so many parent councils that they won't be able to come one by one to Queen's Park, so there won't really be anybody effectively advocating for kids with the Ministry of Education and Training.

School board associations do that now. It's one of their important roles. I think it's a role that has to continue so that Queen's Park and the bureaucrats are not left all by themselves making all the decisions for kids in classrooms, with no effective parent or citizen representation at all.

The other concern that's been raised by parent councils themselves is, if they are given more and more management and decision-making powers, how representative are they? There is something to the democratic process. There is something about elections. As imperfect as they may be, as messy as they may be and sometimes, yes, a little bit costly as they may be, there is a purpose for democracy and elections so that we choose representatives and have representative bodies of citizens. That's what school boards have been for education at a local level. I don't think appointed councils can take on that representative role.

I look at the Ontario Parent Council, and I believe it has an important advisory role to play. I'm glad it was

established, and I hope it continues to be an effective advocate. But I think we have to recognize it's an appointed body and it is appointed by the government. I question how it can be truly an advocate in opposition to government when its members are dependent on the government for appointment.

The other concern that has been expressed if we see school boards essentially being eliminated is that this may be the beginning of a move to the widespread introduction of charter schools in Ontario. It may sound appealing, it may sound like the ultimate in parent management of schools, but I am extremely concerned that it is a very frightening prospect for the future of public education. I hope this isn't part of the hidden agenda of government: to render school boards useless and eventually do away with them altogether, substitute that with parent councils that eventually have widespread decision-making powers essentially to establish charter schools.

The reason I'm concerned is that I've looked pretty closely at the evidence that comes out of places like New Zealand and Britain. I'm concerned, because I am a very passionate advocate for public education, but what has happened in places like Britain and New Zealand is that where charter schools have been established, they have too quickly become exclusive places and the parents who are prepared to run charter schools tend, inevitably, to be those who have the time, the knowledge and the confidence in their knowledge to undertake that responsibility.

Charter schools tend to be strongest in the most well-to-do areas of any community. In those well-to-do areas, charter schools also tend to find ways of topping up what the state provides in support for education. The charter schools that can afford to top up the state support become seen as better schools. They have some extras. Of course, there are people who want to come to the better schools, so they've got all kinds of applications and then they get to choose who comes to the school, who gets the better school and who doesn't. That's when charter schools become not only exclusive but elitist and when two-tiered education begins to develop.

#### 1650

I have spoken often in this Legislature on what I see to be the goals of public education and I will not be apologetic for doing so once again. I believe so strongly that the goal of public education is to provide equality of access to the best education we can provide without regard to an individual's ability to pay that I am prepared to shout that goal from any rooftop I can find to stand on and to shout even longer when I see that goal being threatened by an agenda that the government is not even prepared to set out in the public view for debate.

I believe that public education has been one of the strengths of this society; I believe that the people of this province believe that public education has been one of the strengths of our society. I don't believe the people of this province would accept a threat to the future of public education accessible to all, regardless of ability to pay, and since I believe that threat is inherent in this government's directions, we need to bring that out and have a real debate and not have our public education system demolished bit by bit with good-news-sounding



announcements by the minister and the government. I am truly afraid that the end result of this seemingly simple, purely political bill may indeed be a challenge to the fundamental principles of public education.

I suppose I should get to the nitty-gritty of the legislation itself, because I think that's one of the responsibilities of the critics in second reading of the bill. It's a little difficult, because there are not many specifics in this piece of legislation. I suppose if you've got a bill that talks about having fewer school boards and significantly changes the role of school boards, then you'd expect to have something in the bill about the role of school boards. You can look through the bill and you're not going to find very much about the role of school boards.

I asked in my briefing with the ministry what changes would be brought to the Education Act to redefine the role of school trustees in accordance with the larger, new, amalgamated boards and the redefined role the minister told us school trustees would have, and I was told that's going to come later in the spring. I find when I read the bill that indeed, as I was told by the ministry officials, any decisions about what these new, amalgamated boards are going to do will be made some time in the future upon the recommendations of something called the Education Improvement Commission.

That is really, if you want to resolve the bill down to one basic thing, all this bill does: set up an Education Improvement Commission that at some point in the future is going to tell the minister what the new boards should look like, how they should be elected and what the role of school trustees should be. It seems to me that turns any idea of commonsense planning completely on its end. I would have thought that a government wanting to bring about some fundamental changes in governance and funding would have an idea of where it wants to be, what it wants to do, would put a plan in place to do it and then would bring in the legislation to back up that plan.

This government has done it in exactly the other way. They've brought in the legislation: "Here's our Fewer School Boards Act. We're going to have fewer school boards and we'll put in place a commission." That's all the legislation does. "We'll put in place a commission, and that commission will then come back and tell us what we wanted to do, what we think we can achieve with the amalgamated school boards" — other than maybe finding \$150 million. What will the school trustees do? How will they be elected? Aren't those questions you might have thought the government would have answers to before it brought in the legislation to amalgamate the school boards? They don't have answers to those questions.

I even asked, how would school trustees be elected, by ward or at large? The answer I got back was, "They'll be elected in the same way they are now." I find that a difficult answer to interpret, because some boards now are elected at large and some boards are elected by ward. I suppose I should just assume, simpleton that I am, that with these new mega-boards they're all going to have to be elected by ward because at large could never work. But I would have liked to have that answer from the people who were about to bring forward the legislation. It seems to me that it's just one of those basic things, but

when I get into the bill I realize that the reason there are no answers is because it hasn't been thought out yet, and the Education Improvement Commission is going to be given incredible powers to decide what's going to happen.

You want to talk about challenges to democracy. Does this ever remind me of the Hospital Restructuring Commission that was set up by Bill 26 exactly a year ago today, an independent, non-accountable, non-elected body of people appointed by the government, a government that was going to wash its hands of any responsibility for any decisions made by that health restructuring commission, which was then sent out to fundamentally change the way health care is delivered to people in our communities.

We have seen over the course of the last months the way that independent, non-accountable, non-elected body has imposed its decisions on people in our communities. I happen to think they're also the decisions of the government, but the government likes to pretend they aren't when the decisions are ones the community doesn't like. We've got it again: the Education Improvement Commission.

I could take the time today, and I just may take the time, to go into the specifics, because this is the bulk of the legislation. These pages that set up the Education Improvement Commission are really the bulk of this legislation that's here for debate, setting out the responsibilities of the Education Improvement Commission, which shall basically "oversee the transition to the new system of education governance in Ontario."

They're going to do things like "coordinate processes relating to elections of members of district school boards and elections of members of school authorities...." That's how a trustee is going to be elected.

They're going to "identify issues relating to the establishment of French-language district school boards that should, in the opinion of the commission, be addressed and consider and make recommendations to the minister on those issues."

They are going to "identify issues that should, in the opinion of the commission, be addressed, relating to representation on district...boards of the interests of members of bands in respect of which there is agreement under this act to provide instruction to pupils who are Indians within the meaning of the Indian Act...." There was certainly no time to think about where native education would fit into this new, amalgamated board, so the Education Improvement Commission is going to do that.

They're going to "identify other key issues that should, in the opinion of the commission, be addressed, including but not limited to issues relating to the distribution of the assets and liabilities of existing boards and the transfer of staff of existing boards" — a sweeping power to determine the future of school board employees in this province.

They are going to "consider, conduct research, facilitate discussion and make recommendations to the minister on the feasibility of increasing parental involvement in educational governance." That's parent councils. This government, which is about to fundamentally change the nature of elected representative government for education



and replace it with parent councils, has not even decided what the role of parent councils is going to be. The Education Improvement Commission, this all-wise body of people to be appointed by the government, is going to decide whether indeed it is feasible to have parent councils and what their roles should be.

Does this government take any responsibility for planning, or is the need to have a political spin document out on Monday so great that they can't take the time to do any of their own thinking or planning at all?

There are further transitional controls the Education Improvement Commission is given, and they include — I find this really quite alarming — the review of the 1997 school board budgets in order to “amend and approve them when the commission considers it appropriate.” Fundamental decisions about spending that are to take place during this transitional period are to be made by a group of people appointed by the government with no direct electoral accountability, and I believe that is truly undemocratic: the spending of taxpayers' money by a group of people who will be appointed by the minister, with the government taking no responsibility, and being given that power over and above the power that is currently in the legislation assigned to school trustees who are elected by their electors to spend the property tax dollars they have raised.

Even before the ministry takes education off the property tax, they are giving an appointed group of people the power to approve and amend the budget decisions of those local school boards. They are also giving them the ability to “establish and publish guidelines with respect to appointments, hiring and promotion” during this transitional period, so they'll make the decisions that will guide the school boards as to how you carry out amalgamation, what you do with the employees of all these school boards who are about to disappear in the amalgamation.

1700

I don't know today whether or not I should be getting into the sheer anxiety that must be felt, not only by all the parents out there who are concerned about where this is going but certainly by all the employees of school boards who have no idea how these guidelines to be established by the Education Improvement Commission, a group of people who have not yet been identified, are going to affect their lives and their futures.

The point is that nothing's been decided. If you listen to the minister talk, you'd think maybe they actually knew what they were doing, except if you listen closely, you realize that every time he says something it's different from what he said the time before, because the Minister of Education, when asked about the new boards and the role of the new boards, said they were going to have a less-hands-on role.

Then when he was asked specifically what they would do in this less-hands-on role, he said, “They're going to continue to oversee the managers of the system.” He said, “They're going to continue to be employers of record,” although he didn't explain what that meant. He was asked who people should call if they had a problem with buses or they needed a new bus route and he said, “That's still going to be a function of the district school board.”

I'm not sure what's changed in that description. It sounds to me like these school boards, although they are going to be restricted to \$5,000 because it's a part-time job and in my part of the province they're going to have to travel hundreds of miles to get a school board meeting, are still going to have all the managerial hands-on functions that the current school boards have.

I had asked the same question of the ministry staff at the briefing and I got a letter from the minister's executive assistant to try to explain to me what it is they thought the new role of trustees would be and he said, “Trustees will be expected to focus their attention on the development of policies which will enhance the quality of education for students, not on the day-to-day operation of the school system.” But then he goes on to describe some of the things school trustees will be expected to do and it sounds to me pretty much like what school trustees have always done, which is not to have the day-to-day management of the school system, but to keep a critical watch on the management of the school system.

There is another new role perhaps for school boards that at least is more emphasized in Mr Weir's letter and which Mr Snobelen I notice emphasized in his introductory comments today, and that is:

“As the government introduces the new vision for education with its focus on the student and teacher in the classroom, the role of the trustee will be focused on ensuring implementation of the provisions of the Education Act, approving school board policies and procedures, and reporting to the Ministry of Education and Training and the public on the implementation of performance measures based on provincial standards for students, school and school board administrators, and staff.”

It sounds to me like boards are going to be much more of a reporting body to the minister rather than effective local decision-making bodies themselves, although Mr Weir goes on to say, “Trustees will also approve budget allocations through an open public process and policies on capital and transportation and human resources, as well as employ staff.”

So I guess they still do have their hands-on managerial role. I don't know what sort of budget decisions they could possibly make since the ministry is going to control 100% of the funding and 100% of the allocations, and maybe this is too much to think would actually be happening, but presumably is going to be basing its funding allocations to the school boards on something related to the needs of students in the school system as the ministry sees them.

I don't know how much decision-making ability for budgets local boards are going to have. I really question why the government didn't just go the whole route, which is clearly where it wants to go, and simply eliminate school boards altogether since it's going to have total control, and total control is clearly what the government wants.

I can only come to one conclusion: The reason they didn't eliminate school boards altogether is because the minister still needs a scapegoat. He still needs somebody to take the blame if people don't actually like the decisions that are made. It's better to have at least a nominal local board available to be seen to be responsible for the



decisions, even though in fact the minister will be pulling all the financial strings and making all those decisions. The local board will be a good scapegoat and not a whole lot more.

One of the unanswered questions that not even the Education Improvement Commission has been given powers to deal with — it doesn't appear in this particular piece of legislation, although I think it's a logical question — is exactly how is this commercial tax going to be levied? School boards are not going to have the power to raise any property taxes at all. Residential property taxpayers will not be paying anything for education. We know that. So the Ministry of Education is now going to go out into every community in this province, and I want the members opposite to understand this so that when the businesses in your community come to you and say, "What the heck happened here?" you'll know. The Ministry of Education will have the power to go in and levy an education tax on the businesses in your communities.

I asked the question, and it seemed to me like a pretty basic question, "Will there be one uniform mill rate for all the businesses across the province?" The answer I got back was that that has not been decided yet. There are only two possibilities. One is a uniform mill rate in which every community will pay one mill rate, and I can tell you that businesses in my home town are not going to like it very much if they're paying the Toronto commercial mill rate right now, but one uniform mill rate might be a way to go, or else — here's the other alternative — the Ministry of Education, the government of Ontario, will go into each community separately and decide what business taxes will be paid on commercial properties for education.

Doesn't that scare you as local representatives, that Queen's Park, your government, is going to be responsible for levying local property taxes, so when business comes to you and says, "Why are our taxes going up?" you'll have to acknowledge that there is a direct responsibility for setting those business taxes? Doesn't it worry you just a little bit that when even that basic question is asked — because normally you'd have school trustees who decide what the local mill rate is going to be. That's not going to happen any longer. School trustees don't have that power, so the government has got to decide. Is it going to be a uniform mill rate or is it going to be a different mill rate for every community? They say, "We haven't decided yet."

They didn't give that power to the Education Improvement Commission — I guess they decided there was enough on the plate of that group of all-wise people — so they're going to set up a panel of business people who will at some point in the future advise them on how the business taxes for education should be raised in every community. So there is no answer yet to the question, even though the government has announced that it's paying for education, as to exactly how they're going to raise the business share of the educational costs in our communities. It is absolutely irresponsible that any government should bring in such sweeping changes to governance and to educational financing when they have no idea of how this is even going to work, let alone what its impact is going to be.

I hesitate to get into the discussion about Ernst and Young's concern that maybe the costs could go up under amalgamation. I hesitate because the Ernst and Young report was concerned about two areas in which there are differences. One is differences in services. I think we probably will have an equalizing of services, but it will be an equalizing at a much lower level than the services that are provided now because of the cuts that are going to be made to education.

There are also differences between school boards in their collective agreements. Let's put it on the table. That's one of the underlying issues here. I don't think there's much doubt that this Minister of Education thinks the way you're going to be able to find the \$1 billion to \$2 billion that he needs to contribute towards his share of the tax cut money is by taking over school board bargaining with teachers and others and being able to cut teachers' salaries.

At the very least, an issue related to collective bargaining of teachers is something which needs an open debate. It's not something that should be entered into through the back door, and yet that's exactly what's happening, because there aren't any answers as to how the hundreds of collective agreements that currently exist between boards and teachers and boards and custodians and boards and their secretarial staff are going to be amalgamated in this amalgamation process. Nobody knows. I asked whether or not current contracts were going to be frozen during the transitional period. Nobody knows. Do you really think there will be a single settlement of a single collective agreement between now and the time the amalgamation takes over? Why would you? Nobody knows what's going to happen at the end of it, who is going to be responsible for the amalgamation of those contracts and who is ultimately going to be responsible for collective bargaining. Shouldn't there at least be some openness and some honesty in putting this particular debate on the table?

We know where the Minister of Education is. The Minister of Education had a report, another report, commissioned by a good friend of his, Mr Paroian. I'm sure we all remember Mr Paroian. He's now going around offering free advice to school boards on how to deal with the amalgamations that are forthcoming. Mr Paroian recommended clearly that there should be provincial bargaining and arbitration of any disputes, and his report was based on such bias and such misinformation that it was clearly dismissed as being simply a shill for the government to be able to do what the Minister of Education had already decided it wanted to do. This is yet another of the issues which has not been brought forward by the government which needs to be debated. The fact is that this government doesn't know how any of this will work. They have no idea where they're going with it all next and they haven't looked at the impacts or the practicalities or the details of it at all.

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Neither have they entered into a debate on the most fundamental question, and that is the question of who should govern our schools. Over the past 100-plus years of public education in this province, we've developed a balance in the responsibility for the governance of



education. I think it's an important question to talk about that balance, that fundamental question of who should govern our schools. If we believe, as the minister said today, that the citizens of Ontario believe in the importance of education for the wellbeing of our students and the future of our province, it's important that we ask the question, who then should govern our schools? We should look at the balance.

There is a role for the province in education. I happen to think there is a greater role for Ontario in education than perhaps the province has taken in the last few years. I think it's important for the Ministry of Education, the provincial government, to take a larger role in looking at curriculum, that there is perhaps too much duplication, too much repetition and, yes, perhaps too much unnecessary use of resources in rewriting the curriculum documents board by board. I think you could have more standardized curriculum material prepared by the provincial government, with input from the professionals in the field, and still leave some local flexibility for curriculum that responds to local needs.

So I think the province could do more. They could do more to ensure standards. The province should do more on funding to ensure equity, because we have all been concerned that there is not yet real equity for students in every school board and every community across the province. I do not believe the province should be paying more at the expense of dumping billions of dollars more of the cost of other social programs on to the municipalities, but I do think there is an important role for the province of Ontario in the governance of education.

I also believe there is an important role for school boards, and I'm going to attempt to summarize it as briefly as I can. I happen to believe it is important to have locally elected, accountable school boards that do not manage schools day-to-day but keep a critical watch on the management of our schools on behalf of parents and citizens and taxpayers in their communities, and of course on behalf of their students. I believe the role of boards is to provide local flexibility to reflect local needs. I believe the role of boards is to provide access to concerned parents and citizens and students so they truly have a voice in education. I believe the boards are important community advocates for public education, advocates with the provincial government, advocates for the young people in their area.

I also believe the boards serve a really crucial role in developing partnerships in their communities, partnerships that work for education. I look back at where the co-op programs that are a major thrust of this government's agenda for education have come from: They came from local boards that set up local advisory committees that worked with businesses. I believe local boards have an important role to play in developing partnerships. I actually think one of the reasons school-based management works better at the elementary school level than it does at the secondary school level is because there is so much beyond the school at the secondary school level that needs to be done by local boards and really can't be done by each separate parent council.

I certainly do believe, though, in the role of parents and citizens. I believe in their role on a board. I don't

think we should forget the fact that as messy and imperfect as democracy may be, boards of trustees are representative of the citizens of that community. Parents and citizens have a direct voice in education in a representative way through the electoral process, and that is through their boards of trustees.

I also believe, as I've said, that parents and students and the broader citizenry have a role to play in education at the school level in an advisory capacity and an advocate role. I believe that's the kind of balance we have now in educational governance.

So I ask, why do we have this dislocation? We can make changes that might be necessary; we can bring refinements to the system; we can look for efficiencies. Yes, we can reduce the number of trustees. Yes, we can cap their salaries. Yes, we can continue to look for efficiencies in purchasing and in administration. But we don't need to fundamentally change and dislocate a system that is working much better than the Minister of Education would like us to believe.

I have not many minutes left in my part of this debate. I want to again put the announcement of this legislation and the taking of education taxes off the residential property tax base into the context of the mega-week of announcements. I want to make it absolutely clear that any attempt by the government to talk about all this as being disentanglement, eliminating the confusion of duplication in roles, is just mythical, just part of the deception, because there is more entanglement now and will be in the future than there has ever been before.

Yes indeed, education has been simplified, because the ministry will call the shots for funding; it will have total control and local decision-making will effectively disappear. I suppose that's simpler. I happen to believe that was one of the areas in which the dual responsibility was not only necessary but was working in an effective and shared way between local governance and provincial governance. But certainly it is simpler now in terms of who calls the shots, because Queen's Park and the Minister of Education will call all the shots.

But in every other area of social programs, we do not have disentanglement, we do not have simplification; we have more confusion. We have shared responsibility in a host of areas, from welfare and family benefits to child care to long-term care, areas where the municipality had no responsibility before and where the dumping of costs on the property tax base is a way of abandoning the provincial government's responsibility for ensuring equity.

At the same time as they seem to have accepted some greater responsibility for equity in education at a provincial level — although I think it is going to be equal parts of a much smaller pie — they have abandoned any responsibility for ensuring equity in every other area of our social programs and have dumped, totally abdicated, any financial responsibility entirely on to the municipalities in areas of social housing and public health.

This is not disentanglement. This is not less confusing. This is not simplification. It turns on its ear every piece of advice that has ever been given to any government about how to disentangle services. It simplifies the one area in which shared jurisdictions were necessary and



working well and puts in its place a host of areas in which shared jurisdictions will not work well. It does it all under the camouflage of reducing property taxes, which is a complete and total deception, because we all know it is a \$1-billion dump on local property taxes and that either property taxes will go up or all services, including education, are going to go down.

There is absolutely no question that this government is taking control of its education costs and dumping costs on to the municipality in order to pay for taking the share of education costs — while saving itself \$1 billion into the bargain, because this isn't a wash; it's a \$1-billion extra dump on the municipal property tax base — but taking control of education costs so it can cut the spending that goes to education, which will hurt kids in the classroom, and that this is all being done ultimately for one reason, and that is to pay for a \$6-billion tax cut promise.

I'm a veteran now with the battle over Bill 26, which, as I've already said today, a year ago we felt was the biggest affront to democracy we'd ever seen. But I believe this bill is part and parcel of the ultimate in political cynicism. I believe this is motivated by pure political cynicism, because it is a cheap political hit against people who have committed themselves for years, committed hours and hours of work and energy and concern week after week with little or no compensation, simply because they were concerned about education; a cheap political hit against those people who have served as trustees of public education, who have been the advocates for public education and who have struggled to preserve a quality of public education in the face of continued constraints.

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It's a cheap political hit to justify this supposedly good news announcement by refusing to even recognize the value of the role of school trustees. It is a cynical, cynical piece of legislation in its sheer irresponsibility because virtually nothing has been decided. There are no answers to the most basic questions. It hasn't been thought through yet. They are simply going to turn the power to make the decisions, to come back and tell the government what to do, over to another appointed body and give it more decision-making powers than most appointed bodies, other than the Health Services Restructuring Commission, have ever had.

It is a cynical, cynical piece of legislation because it is part of the political spin. It is part of the overall deception in its camouflaging for the big dump on property taxpayers in the hope that people won't notice, that they'll just remember this was a government that took education off the property tax. It's cynical in its deception because it is a way of cutting educational costs to pay for the tax cut.

It is, I am afraid, cynical in its deception because it may prove to be a way of allowing the Minister of Education to advance his own personal agenda of introducing, not only charter schools in the name of greater parental involvement but also privatization, because when the cuts to education start coming and the quality of education starts deteriorating, as it will because I don't believe education can sustain more cuts — we've already

seen them hurting the classroom and more cuts will hurt the classroom again — people will start saying, as they are saying about health care, "If we can't afford to pay for quality for everyone, then let those who can afford to pay buy something better."

Just as we are threatened with two-tier health care, we will be threatened with two-tier education and we will be threatened with privatization of education. We have a Minister of Education who I personally believe sees that as a not unhappy agenda to achieve.

In my view it is a very black day in the history of the Legislature when public education can be jeopardized to pay for a tax cut that was made to get a political party elected, and when a minister can be allowed to impose his private views on a century and a half of the achievements of public education. There has been so much thrown at us in mega-week, and that was a part of the cynical strategy as well, part of the camouflage strategy: Throw so much at them, start with the supposedly easy political sells and the supposedly good news announcements, and hope that nobody will notice the billion-dollar extra dumped on the property taxpayers.

So much, so many huge changes, not only in the way we're financed but in the way services are delivered, in the way we're governed, all thrown at us last week, that it is going to be difficult to get this seemingly small bill the attention it deserves. But I believe that the underlying agendas of this bill and what this bill will ultimately mean to students and to education in this province are so significant that we have to call on, not only all the members of the Legislature but concerned citizens across this province, to really recognize what this Fewer School Boards Act is really all about, what the government's ultimate agenda is in bringing this in.

Even with all of the concerns with all of the other issues, including the creation of a megacity here in the Metro area at the same time as the Minister of Education quietly goes out to create mega-boards across the province, we must be able to devote enough time and energy and concern to fighting the changes that could be so destructive to public education.

I trust the public will notice, will see through the camouflage and the deception, will understand that this is a fundamental threat to the future of public education and will be ready to stand up and defend what I know it values, and that is a continued access to quality of education for every student in every community of this province, regardless of their ability to pay. The only way we will continue to have that is if we continue to have strong local accountability, local accessibility and an ability to advocate for public education.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Questions or comments? The member for London Centre.

**Mrs Boyd:** I want to congratulate the member for Fort William on a very fine speech which exposed the cynicism of this government that she spoke of in terms of the implications of Bill 104. I think the member is quite right to point out how very inappropriate it is for this government to have mixed this bill in with all the other actions of the mega-week as a means of trying to continue the shell game, trying to convince the people of Ontario that somehow they can continue to enjoy the level of education that we have built.



Indeed, the member for Fort William is right: It has been built very carefully over 150 years. It has been based on local accountability. It has been based on the ability of citizens to access their trustees, to influence the way in which first the teaching itself and then the policies of a provincial Ministry of Education happened. One of the things my constituents say to me is how shocked and surprised they are that a government that has the same name as the Bill Davis and John Robarts governments, which contributed a great deal to the education system as it exists today, would come along and destroy what was a very fine legacy.

That does not mean to say, as the member pointed out, that there doesn't need to be changes. That is not to say that what we have needs to stay. It is to say that we need to evolve, rather than have a sudden rupture and explosion that destroys what we have learned in the past and takes no account of what is best for the children and youth in our own communities.

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** I listened with great interest to my colleague the member for Fort William in her speech. One has to wonder whether time has not passed her by when you look at what her colleagues in the Liberal caucus have said about the government's proposals, when you look at what the Liberal members have said about our government's direction. While campaigning for the Liberal leadership, Dalton McGuinty said about school board amalgamation: "We have an obligation to consider it. We can't back away from the prospect of amalgamation. As Liberals, we're fiscally responsible." Orillia debate, September 25, 1996.

Dwight Duncan said while campaigning for Liberal leader: "Would I reduce the number of school boards? If it meant putting more dollars in the classrooms and more teachers in the classrooms and improving ratios for kids, yes."

Even the Liberal member from Ottawa, whom I have a great deal of respect for, said on CJOH on December 28: "We've heard that so often, that we have got to look at reductions for school boards. I think the government is on the right track by looking at it very closely." A good friend of mine from Ottawa, a Liberal member, said that.

So when the member opposite stands in her place and says that this government is looking for some cheap trick with respect to reducing the number of school trustees, people in the public are very cynical and you wonder why they're cynical. The member opposite said this government's attempt to reduce the number of trustees is a cheap political hit. Well, if the member wants to talk about cheap political hits, her smiling picture on the front page of this document — within the first year, "We will reduce the number of trustees." And she criticizes this government for doing something about it?

Sometimes you can't just talk; sometimes you've got to act. We need more than words. Things like "considering it," things like "looking at it" aren't enough. Sometimes you have to make a decision and implement something. You can't be on both sides of the same issue. And you wonder why the public gets cynical? Clearly, this government is acting on the commitments it made.

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** I would just like to compliment the member for Fort William on a good

number of points that she has put forth here this afternoon. We know her dedication to education and her former work as the chair of the Lakehead Board of Education and her commitment to the students of this province. As she indicated, what the province has actually seen is just part of a big dump, and I can tell you that many communities throughout the northwest and in my riding know what's out there and know exactly what this government has done. I think the member for Fort William has said it well in terms of taking that control of education out of the hands of the local people, the folks who know most what their communities need.

1730

In my area alone, in the northwest of the province, we're going to have now a mega-board. I was just indicating to the interns earlier on that we're going to have trustees who are going to be expected to drive from places like Red Lake and from places like Fort Frances to a common meeting area. I often wonder about what kinds of people you're going to get in terms of education, what kind of involvement they're going to want to have in a board that stretches from Thunder Bay to the Manitoba border. Again it's just something this government has not taken into consideration, the differences of the northwest, the vast area and the distances between the present school boards today. The member for Fort William has certainly put forth the argument that there is a difference between downtown Toronto and northwestern Ontario. Again, local accountability — out the window; local access to parents who want to go and discuss the issue with their board — out the window.

I would just like to congratulate the member for giving us a good amount of her experience as both a chair of the board and now here as a member of the Legislature.

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** I would also like to congratulate the member for Fort William for the speech she has just given this House. She has, in her own inimitable way, elaborated on a number of the very alarming issues that are raised in this piece of legislation, not only in the legislation itself but in the way it's being delivered and in the context within which it is being delivered.

This is again an example of this government trying to kill a flea with a sledgehammer. We have some challenges, there's no doubt. There isn't anybody in this place who won't agree there are some things we as government have to look at over time to change, to make things better, to improve, to respond to new information and to have our systems evolve. I don't think anybody will disagree that is a healthy exercise for all of us to be involved in. But this government has not, over the last year and a half, shown itself to be able to get its head around the complications, the sophistication of the systems all of us together in this province have put in place over a number of years to serve our communities, to serve our children, to serve each other. This is another example of the simplistic approach that in the end will do damage. It will do major damage to the communities, it will do major damage to families and will do damage —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Martin:** That's right. It will do damage to children, the lack of respect shown by this government over



the last year and a half for a very simple and fundamental democratic process of consultation, of sitting down and talking with people and trying to figure out with them what is in their best interests. This government is arrogant, as the member for St Catharines has just said, in their eagerness and lack of experience to do some things that are going to destroy this province, destroy communities and destroy families.

**The Deputy Speaker:** You have two minutes to reply.

**Mrs McLeod:** I should begin my two-minute response by suggesting to the member for Nepean, who happens to have once been a classmate of one of my daughters, that we grandmothers are a little sensitive to allusions to time passing us by. But since you've made that allusion, I would tell you that maybe time has passed me by, because I find myself with a very long memory that goes back to exactly those governments that were referred to by the member for London North, to previous Conservative governments. I was a trustee for a long time, providing local accountability in education with a provincial government that actually cared about education.

I happen to remember a Conservative government that brought in special education legislation because it was so committed to the needs of special education kids and so concerned about equal opportunity. I never for one moment, even though I am of a different party stripe, would have questioned the commitment of previous Conservative governments to the goals of public education, and I have talked to many long-time Conservatives who share that concern who are absolutely dismayed by what this government is doing and threatens to do to education in this province.

I make no apologies to any member of this House for any statements I have made about directions for change in education. If the member for Nepean would listen up for a moment and open his ears as well as his mind, he would have heard me say, "You can make changes, you can make refinements, you can reduce the number of trustees, you can cap their salaries, which is consistent with every bit of advice this province has been given by consistent studies; you don't have to destroy local governments and lose local accountability and local access and turn all the decision-making power over to a government and a minister that are determined to take \$1.2 billion out of education to find a tax cut." If you don't think it is deception and camouflage to claim you're doing this and cutting property taxes when you know full well that at the end of the day property taxes are going to go up because they have more than \$1 billion net cost on property taxes, or we are going to lose services, if you don't think this is cheap, answer the questions I asked today.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Time has expired. Further debate?

**Mr Marchese:** The member for Algoma, who is our education critic, was unable to be here to do the leadoff, so I would ask for unanimous consent to postpone our leadoff.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed? Agreed.

**Mr Marchese:** It's a pleasure for me to have a half-hour to talk to Bill 104, entitled the Fewer School Boards Act. I want to begin by saying that the assault on the

educational system isn't just beginning; it has already begun. It began last year, when this government took out of the educational system \$400 million and did some major things that I think began the deterioration of the quality of education in Ontario.

Part of it was the elimination of junior kindergarten. They argue, of course, that they haven't eliminated junior kindergarten, that boards of education do that. The real problem is that this province funds those programs, and as a result of limiting, restricting or cutting off the funding for that particular program boards have been left with very little choice but to cut junior kindergarten from their jurisdiction. We believe, I as a former teacher believe, that's a problem, that students come to the educational system unequal, that we are not all prepared in the same way and that some students who come from academic, wealthy backgrounds tend by and large to fare better because they were better prepared, particularly in the early years. When you eliminate junior kindergarten, you've caused serious damage to how we reduce that inequality, particularly in those early years. But this government, of course, doesn't care about those considerations.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** How do I know? If you had cared, you would have kept the money for the program. But if you take the money away from the program, it means that your consideration around the issue is obviously minimal. If you wanted to reduce inequality in the educational system you would have kept funding junior kindergarten programs, because that is the area and that's the time, in those early years, when you deal with a lack of appropriate preparation. If you compensate for some of that inequality in those years you may likely be able to achieve some equality for all students. You may not in all cases, but you can reduce those inequalities.

The government further continued its assault on adult education programs at a time when many people in this society, in Ontario, have gone back to acquire courses as a part of that educational continuum to deal with the fact that many are being fired by the private sector and fired by the provincial sector and fired, to be fair as well, by the federal Liberal government. They're being fired by all sides. People recognizing this, of course, in their great fears have gone back to school to acquire new knowledge and hopefully get into other fields that might be able to employ them. So continuing education has been part of an important strategy for boards of education — particularly in Metro but not exclusively so — all over Ontario.

**1740**

This government, of course, cut back funding for adult education. That obviously was not part of their consideration, because if it were, they would not have cut funding to that program. This is the worst of economic times to cut these programs, both for adults and for young people at the junior kindergarten level, but they obviously didn't have any qualms in cutting the funding for such programs. If they did, it would have been manifest, and I can tell you, I don't see them flinching one bit as they make these cuts.

The assault on education continues. It began last year; it continues again this year. How does it begin? The



public decides how your cuts are hurting our educational system, but how does it now begin? This government has taken the education portion out of property taxes.

They say it with a great deal of excitement. The Minister of Municipal Affairs said, "Our seniors are going to be very happy that we took the education portion out of property taxes, and so should the whole world be." Well, there's a problem, and the reason why there's a problem is because the senior is not getting property tax relief. This government, in its interesting wisdom, has decided to take the \$5.4 billion for education out of the property taxes and replace that \$5.4 billion with additional costs having to do with welfare, child care, long-term care, other health matters, housing, transportation, libraries and many more; programs that generally would be dealt with, by and large, by the provincial government.

The things David Crombie said about welfare, which he never would have dreamed and/or hoped — in fact, he encouraged the Premier not to dump welfare on to municipalities. Those things are now back on the backs of property taxpayers. The province, which has the appropriate jurisdiction for these matters, because it is the level that is able to raise more money than municipalities, has decided to dump those costs on to the municipalities. This government knows that welfare has been expensive and will continue to be expensive. Recessions, as we have seen, recur every five or seven years. They come back, and when they come back costs will be greater for municipalities. Long-term care, as everybody knows, is going to be expensive. Why? Because there are going to be more seniors. These costs that have been dumped are going to be a weighty problem for the property tax owner.

Why take \$5.4 billion out of the property tax system for education? Why do it? What is the real goal of doing that if the intent is to achieve a revenue-neutral position? Why do it? I'll tell you why: It's all part of this whole grand scheme. It's all connected here. Nothing this government does should be considered in isolation of this grand scheme of theirs. They are taking control of education money to be able to eventually, down the line — and it won't be too long — give less to all boards of education. That is the intent: to take \$1 billion out of the educational system. I predict it will be more than \$1 billion. I predict it will be anywhere from \$1 billion to \$2 billion out of education alone. So much for that promise of not taking one cent out of education.

Some separate school trustees are not delighted but happy because they think this is going to achieve for them some measure of funding equity. That's not going to happen. I'm afraid to tell those separate school trustees — some of them — that the equity they were seeking will not happen. What this government is going to do is the following: Take money generally in its control, fund public education systems in places like Metro, Ottawa and other areas at the same level as separate school boards, and that's how they're going to achieve equity. That's what this government is talking about when they say, "We are going to homogenize our funding across Ontario." They'll be taking money from many boards and arrive at equity with the separate school

board in that way. There is no more money for the separate school system. The trustees who think that is the case are dead wrong to believe it. They're on the wrong track.

The agenda of this government is to reduce funding for education. That's what this is all about. Why are they doing this? Because they need money to finance their income tax cut. These fine members across the way deny this all the time. They deny it, but they know this is taking money out of the system to support the few privileged people who don't need the support. The ones who are going to benefit from the income tax cut are those with privilege, both economic and professional. They're the ones who benefit from this. The person making \$25,000 or \$30,000 has barely seen the advantage that comes with an income tax cut. Many people I meet still are wondering where that money is coming from because they haven't seen it yet, "Where is that income tax cut?"

I can tell you this: The banker has seen it. The banker who earns \$1.6 million has felt the income tax cut already. I can see them scurrying about buying those fridges and stoves and toasters and the like, things they really needed with \$1.6 million; it's not enough to buy these essentials. They're scurrying about to invest. As they open the doors for their private investor folks to create these jobs, they're scurrying about to help them out to spend that money. Imagine that. It's important.

Mr Speaker, you're alluding to the fact that somehow I may not be speaking to this bill, but I am. They're all connected. You're almost making it appear as if somehow this little bill is disconnected from the cuts we have already suffered last year, or that taking the education portion out of the property tax is disconnected from this bill. Please. It's all connected. To force me into a position where we simply isolate the issue would be wrong. We've got to give the macro-picture for the public to understand where we're at with this government, what this agenda is all about.

This government has demoralized everyone in the system, has demoralized all of them. They are assaulting everybody. They have assaulted primarily teachers, insulted by assaulting them. They've insulted many, and many are angry. As a former teacher I see and talk to many of them. They're not happy with the fact that these people here don't trust the work they've been doing in the classroom. I talk to many trustees as well. They are insulted by the assault on the performance of the job that they have been doing. I was a former trustee for eight years. I quit teaching —

**Mr O'Toole:** Doubled your salary, a \$10,000 raise.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Marchese:** What we do here is irrelevant; it's only what the others do, because our role in raising of salaries has nothing to do with it. We'll get to that; I have time.

I quit teaching when I got elected to be able to do the job as a trustee full-time. We were making \$7,000 then. We didn't have these fine members asking why I quit teaching, why I would even dream of doing that job full-time. I remember I had one Tory come to ask me why I would be foolish enough to do that. That's okay. It was an individual choice. I made that choice. I understand



that. But many of us believe that what we were doing as trustees was important.

I have to tell you this: Why did I enter politics in education? As someone who was interested as a teacher and someone who was interested as a parent, who realized how streaming affected students, how many Italian Canadians in the early 1960s were hoarded into vocational schools because they were told they were good with their hands and weren't so great with their intellectual skills, so they assisted them to get into the vocational schools to be carpenters, I presume, or construction workers, manual workers, bricklayers and the like. We were good with our hands, they told us, so they streamed us into vocational schools. Many Portuguese Canadians in my riding were streamed into vocational schools because they too were good with their hands. That was a problem. It was a problem that needed to be dealt with by the educational system. It was wrong to direct many of those students who came, who had the ability, to those schools.

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Why did I get involved, and people like me? I wasn't the only one. We got involved so we could help students, but particularly to help parents become more actively involved in the education of their children so as to be able to defeat this problem called streaming that herded many of their children away from academic schools. That's why we got involved. Many people in the Toronto Board of Education system understand the role we have played as trustees. They knew that the role we played was critical in being able to bring about some equity for many of those students.

The black children in our system were angry because they too were directed to vocational schools. Did it happen consciously? No, I wouldn't say that. I wouldn't argue that it happened consciously. But I have to tell you that many of those problems we experienced could have been avoided. In fact, now, after years of parental involvement, 80% of our students in the Toronto Board of Education system are away from level 3 vocational schools and into level 4 and level 5 programs, and they're doing better because of parental involvement, stimulated by the support that was given to them by the trustees.

They have become vocal in the Toronto Board of Education system, and I speak about that because that's where I was for eight years prior to 1990. They became vocal and they became active, some as angry parents, but many who realized that by simply being actively involved and seen by their children to be actively involved in their own way — whether they as parents had grade 5 or grade 10 was irrelevant — that involvement helped their children to achieve and to remove themselves and get away from one stream and into another. That was important, so when this government dumps on trustees, demeans their role, people like me who were there get offended, and I get offended for those colleagues and friends who are still there, not just in Toronto and all over Metro but all over Ontario, who do a job in education because they care about wanting to involve the parents in the education of their children. That was important.

Some of the Tory members obviously don't understand or possibly don't care. I could be wrong. It's sometimes

wrong to say they don't care because it's quite possible that many do. But the point is that you've got to manifest that caring in some way, and manifesting it has to do with what support you give to the educational system and not how you cut in the educational system, which is what all of you are doing.

All of you are saying, "We need to cut to make the educational system better." I have not been able to intellectually understand how you do that. You don't make the system better by cutting. In fact, there will be a great deal of suffering in the Toronto Board of Education system, one that I know very well, because of these cuts. We've seen the assaults by this minister, who says 47% of our costs are in non-educational programs. He's wrong. He doesn't understand it and never explains it and never responds to the questions when asked, because I don't think he understands it.

I've got something here from the Ontario Public School Boards' Association which talks about —

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** That's what Sweeney said. You mandated it.

**Mr Marchese:** I know, but you have an important responsibility to be critical and read those things so you know, so you understand. That's your role, not to say, "You appointed Sweeney and Sweeney told us, so it's fact." You need to understand it. It's important, because if you don't understand it —

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** Do you understand it?

**Mr Marchese:** I believe I do. Spending on elementary education, done by the Ontario Public School Boards' Association; the source is the Ministry of Education and Training. They say, just for the record, elementary and secondary: for the elementary, 67% of our dollars go into the classroom, instructional support is 28%, and central administration is 5%.

Their assault is on the trustees, on that central administration, the trustees and the superintendents. But it's the wrong assault, to focus on that 5%. That's what this minister and these fine soldiers do every day. They know that if you assault trustees and that if you say to them, "Oh, we can save millions of dollars on amalgamating a few boards," that they can solve the problem of funding. It can't be done. This government needs billions; it doesn't just need a couple of million that go to trustees and superintendents. As the Premier just said today, they need billions to be cut out of the educational system.

Other than Metro and a few other areas where they earn more than \$15,000, most trustees earn less than \$10,000. If you cut their salaries and you reduce the number of trustees, in the end you've still got a great problem to solve, your problem of your income tax cut, which requires you to have — I don't know why you're squirming with that face. You require \$3 billion every year. You've got to get it from somewhere, and you're going to take it out of education, the only place you could go. Of course, health is coming. The assault on our health care system is not too far in the future; it's coming. But you've assaulted these people here who do an important service to our educational system.

Instructional support, another area you have assaulted, includes attendance and guidance, other professional and paraprofessional program support, maintenance, supplies, computers, principals, vice-principals and clerical support. What are you going to do? Are you going to fire all these people? Is that what you're talking about? Do you want to eliminate 28% of this critical part of our educational component? Is that what you are talking about? If that's what you're talking about, you don't have a clue what you're saying and what you're doing.

It fits very well to introduce a bill called the Fewer School Boards Act because, as befits this government, which titles its bills in a way that is very propagandist, it gives the impression to the public that you are about to do something useful, something that they want. But by and by, people will understand what you're doing. They will understand that the real agenda is not the few millions of dollars that you're saving here, that it's elsewhere.

By calling it the Fewer School Boards Act, the Reform-minded public that you have in some of the areas of the 905 and beyond will say: "Oh, this is great. This is exactly what we expected of our elected Reform politicians." That's fine. It will suit some of them. But I tell you, as they begin to scrutinize what you have done and what you are introducing, they will understand that the real agenda is not about reforming the educational

system, because this is not going to do one thing for the improvement of the quality of education for our students and teachers, not one thing.

I know that the Speaker's sister-in-law, whom I met in one of the meetings, believes what I'm saying and agrees with what I'm saying, because at one meeting that I attended where Mr Snobelen, the Minister of Education, was to have attended and did not attend, many of those people were upset at the cuts, upset at all the cuts that are about to be forced upon this province.

**Mr Martin:** What did his sister-in-law say?

**Mr Marchese:** We don't want to be personal. I wouldn't ever dream of saying anything more than that, other than the fact that I met the Speaker's sister-in-law and she was an active parent and she was a very concerned parent, worried about what the cuts mean to the quality of education for her children and for parents like herself.

Mr Speaker, I think we're close to 6 o'clock and I have some time that I would like to have for tomorrow, so I'd like to move adjournment.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** That's perfectly within order, member for Fort York, and the timing was impeccable.

It now being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned till 1:30 of the clock tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO  
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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Renfrew North / -Nord	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND)
Riverdale	Churley, Marilyn (ND)	Wellington	Amott, Ted (PC)
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		Yorkview	Sergio, Mario (L)
		York South / -Sud	Kennedy, Gerard (L)

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Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.



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# Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

# Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

## Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

## Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 22 January 1997

Mercredi 22 janvier 1997



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 22 January 1997

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 22 janvier 1997

*The House met at 1333.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** Tomorrow the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Toronto will speak on behalf of the business community of Metro Toronto and issue a warning that the government's dumping will ultimately drive businesses out of Metro. The resulting pressure of increased residential property taxes will place businesses at a competitive disadvantage. To add to this growing entanglement, the United Way of Greater Toronto is also joining forces to oppose the dumping of social services, seniors' public health care and public housing.

I call upon the Harris government to listen to the growing voices of protest and warning. There is no doubt that the full impact of dumping essential services on to municipalities will result in higher residential property taxes in Metro, drive away small businesses and kill much-needed jobs. This will only lead to more dumping on the poor, their children, the sick, seniors and the disabled, those who can least afford it.

The Common Sense Revolution assured taxpayers that any actions on the part of the government would not result in increases to residential property taxes. Tomorrow this government will have the opportunity to take some much-needed advice from the Metro board of trade and the United Way. I hope it will be listening.

I am pleased to see the Minister of Municipal Affairs is here today and I hope he will be listening tomorrow to the advice of those Metro agencies.

### SCHOOL BOARD RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** I've had the opportunity over the last couple of days to do some in-detail reading of Bill 104, a bill that is going to change the education system in Ontario. I think that bill actually should be renamed. We should be calling that bill "less democracy for people within school board areas" rather than calling it the Fewer School Boards Act. This bill, by regulation, is going to give cabinet the authority to do a number of things that should be spelled out in legislation, rather than giving it by regulation.

What they're going to do through regulatory powers is that they're giving themselves, as a cabinet in this province, the authority to be able not only to establish school boards and what the area should be, but cabinet is going to decide by regulation what the electoral process

shall be for the new school boards in 1997, something that in my view should be spelled out within the legislation itself so that the legislators of this assembly can have a say about how that will happen and have proper debate.

Further to that, the government is establishing an Education Improvement Commission that is going to have vast and far-sweeping powers to be able, among other things, to limit the expenditures of current school boards to \$50,000 to projects within their communities. They are going to force school boards in this province to work towards contracting out so that unionized employees can have their jobs taken out from under them, so that they're able to give some contracts to their individual friends.

I say to the government, this is not a government of the people but rather a government of dictatorial style.

### PROPERTY ASSESSMENT

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth):** A week ago Monday marked the beginning of the Who Does What session for this Legislature. As a government we announced ways of making the provincial and municipal levels of government in Ontario work better for the taxpayers they serve. It's my pleasure today to rise and announce to the House some of the good things that will be happening in Perth as a result of this legislation.

The announced changes to the property assessment and tax policy are, of course, very welcome. It's a well known and widely accepted fact that the people of Perth county have historically paid more in taxes than they've received in services. The new Ontario fair assessment system, which I might add is already in place in Perth county, will maintain fair taxation in this area of the province.

I would also like to point out great news for the farmers that was announced last week. The government will institute a separate property class for farm lands which will be taxed at 25% of the municipal residential rate. The new property class will replace the cumbersome and costly farm tax rebate program currently in place and will give farmers in Perth control over their own money.

I am proud to be part of a government that's fulfilling its election promises. These good-news announcements are just another stop along the way to lowering taxes, reducing the size and costs of government and creating better-quality services at a lower cost to the taxpayers of Perth county and Ontario.

### SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** I was shocked by a report released yesterday by the Ontario School Bus Association. This report said that the reductions in transportation budgets have raised questions about the safety of Ontario



school buses. It was described as having reached a critical point. The fleet's age is increasing and there are fewer buses transporting more children.

What shocked me most about this report, however, was the Premier's flippant attitude towards it. He, in typical Mike Harris fashion, shrugged it off, saying that the government was not making the cuts, someone else is. It seems the Premier will spend millions of dollars on television ads to crow about his cuts, but he refuses to take responsibility for his actions. This is not acceptable. The Premier is making the cuts and the Premier must take responsibility.

I have seen this government drag its feet on bus safety issues before. Mr Palladini says that he supports my private member's bill, which seeks to protect children who ride school buses, but his government refuses to bring it forward. Now the Premier and the Minister of Education are choosing to do the same when they refuse to take responsibility for their actions. This must stop. This is not a cheap political game you are playing. You are playing with children's lives. You are making the cuts, you are stalling on legislation and you are responsible for the safety of our children in Ontario.

1340

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** Beware, Mr Premier and Mr Minister of Municipal Affairs. Opposition to your mega-taxed megacity is growing like the proverbial mushroom.

Never before in my nine years in electoral politics have I seen so many people galvanized by one issue. I have been attending meetings in Toronto for a couple of months now and have watched the numbers grow from a few dozen to, earlier this week, up to 1,500 people. It is growing and growing. They're angry at what they see as a poorly conceived and ill-explained plan to dissolve a way of local government that has served them well for over a century.

Why is there so much opposition to this plan, the Premier may ask. Well, let me tell him this: These people are frightened at what they see as a sure-fire way to turn this city into the American urban nightmare, a shell of its former self — and Mr Minister, don't keep on fooling yourself. They are mega-angry.

These citizens are also furious because of your complete public contempt for public opinion. This is not minor tinkering we're talking about here; these are very serious, big mega-plans to change the way we're governed and to increase taxes for all of us who live in Metro Toronto.

I want to congratulate John Sewell and all the other thousands of citizens across Toronto who are fighting the minister on this.

#### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk):** Recently we distributed a small business survey in my riding of Norfolk and some of the results were surprising. We did this survey because small business generates more than 85% of new private sector jobs.

In their responses 54% of local businesses stated they are more likely to expand as a result of the recent Ontario government reforms. Of those planning to expand, 36% stated they will be creating new jobs, mainly full-time positions. I find this very encouraging.

The government policies cited as most influential in their decision were the repeal of the NDP labour laws and the employer health tax cut. Other reasons given were the income tax cut, the hydro rate freeze, the scrapping of the \$50 corporate filing fee and the employee quota law, and the minimum wage freeze. Several owners noted that a strong, positive overall direction from the present government was definitely a factor.

Of serious concern, however, was the response by half the employers that our education system does not prepare young people for employment with their companies. Only 11% indicated that students are prepared. On the positive side, 75% stated that the private sector should be more involved in providing students with the skills and training they need to work with their companies.

This survey confirms in my mind that we need new policies, new investment and particularly new business.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** Yesterday we witnessed a great victory for the citizens of Metropolitan Toronto. The Premier blinked, sounded the bugles of retreat and pushed Colonel Leach aside. Yes, the thousands of people who are meeting all over Metro, fighting against the dictatorial imposition of the megacity, with its incredible dumping of everything from welfare to health care on the property taxpayers, have made the Premier blink and retreat.

Right here yesterday, with opposition leader Dalton McGuinty asking the question and the galleries filled with citizens fighting Premier Harris's dismantling of democracy in Metro, the megacity dumpster went into reverse. People do care about their community and won't be denied their right to be heard on the future of their cities through a referendum. There is a growing tide and that is why the Premier blinked and backtracked.

The opposition and the Citizens for Local Democracy fighting this megacity madness are not going to go away. They are going to stay and fight and ensure that Mike Harris doesn't destroy one of the best places in the world to live in: the cities of Toronto, North York, Etobicoke, East York and Scarborough. These are great communities. They won't be destroyed without a fight.

#### ONTARIO LOTTERY CORP

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** This government talks a big game about small business. When it comes time to deliver, there's nothing. Small business, along with workers and students and seniors and the sick, gets skewered again by this government, and I know that. People like Fred and Mary Gabriel and Anna Hucajluk in the members' gallery know it, and Brent Warner, a small business person down in Niagara region, knows it.

Brent Warner, and the minister ought to know about Brent Warner and had a chance to assist Brent Warner, who is a small business person, an entrepreneur, has



already been forced to shut down his Niagara Falls variety store and is just hanging on, just barely hanging on at Thorold Magazine on Front Street in Thorold. He employs people, he contributes to the economy of downtown Thorold, yet this government refuses to adequately supervise an Ontario Lottery Corp that has become increasingly corrupt, that has become increasingly favourable to a particular sector of small retailers, ignoring the needs of other participants, people like Brent Warner.

This government has a chance now to intervene and tell Ontario Lottery Corp to finally, once and for all, import some fairness into its practice of allowing licences to small business people, retailers like Brent Warner who have been arbitrarily, unfairly and discriminatorily denied one.

I tell you Thorold Magazine is going to shut down in short order if Brent Warner can't get help from this government in resolving what has been a long-standing and oppressive conflict between him and Ontario Lottery Corp. I'm calling upon this government to put its money where its mouth is.

### CONTROL OF SMOKING

**Mrs Helen Johns (Huron):** I would like to advise the House that this week is National Non-Smoking Week. In fact today is Weedless Wednesday, the one day of the year that smokers are asked to butt out.

We are all concerned about the effects of smoking, particularly with our young people. In Canada 28% of teenage boys and 27% of teenage girls are smokers. If we can prevent people from smoking before they reach the age of 20, the chances that they will start smoking are very slim.

That is why our government has been active in enforcing the Tobacco Control Act, which was passed in 1994. A total of 926 charges have been laid for tobacco sales to minors in Ontario and this is more than the total in all other provinces combined. As well, there have been 14 automatic prohibitions issued to stores that have been convicted twice of selling tobacco to minors, and they are not permitted to sell any tobacco products or store them on their premises for six months.

The percentage of tobacco retailers willing to sell to minors in Ontario has dropped from 45% in 1994 to approximately 26% in 1996.

In a CFRB people poll conducted yesterday, 18% of the respondents felt that our laws were too harsh. I would say to them that if this law prevents even one young person from starting to smoke, these efforts are worth it.

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

#### RED TAPE REDUCTION RÉDUCTION DES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** Today seven cabinet colleagues and I will

introduce nine bills in this House to cut red tape, eliminate wasteful rules and unnecessary regulations and create a more efficient government. Our goal is to provide greater service to taxpayers and customers while we remove barriers to business growth and investment which will create jobs.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the hard work and dedication of the Red Tape Review Commission, of commission chair Frank Sheehan and of the staff who were involved in cutting red tape government-wide. With their invaluable assistance this government has made significant progress in the fight against red tape. We are eliminating or amending more than 1,500 regulations, we are repealing 45 acts and amending 181 other pieces of legislation.

The legislation I will introduce as Minister of Finance, the Red Tape Reduction Act, will amend 26 acts and repeal nine obsolete statutes. The finance legislation cuts red tape so the financial services industry can better serve consumers and businesses by reducing the delays in costs imposed by obsolete rules, unnecessary paperwork and needless duplication.

At the same time we are ensuring that Ontario depositors, policyholders and investors continue to be protected. We are removing red tape that stands in the way of improved customer service. We are also improving government services by making it easier for people to provide information to the government through electronic filings and more flexible forms. Cutting red tape while improving consumer protection helps unleash the job-creating forces of the private sector, improves customer service and benefits all taxpayers by making government more efficient.

1350

The legislation my colleagues and I are introducing today is not the end of our efforts to cut red tape. There are additional measures to be taken both to reduce the existing red tape barriers and to stop more red tape from being created in the future.

I am pleased to receive the final report of the Red Tape Review Commission, which has some 130 further recommendations on how our government can cut red tape. Using this final report as a guide, we will create better government and build a positive climate for job creation in Ontario.

We made the commitment in the Common Sense Revolution to remove barriers to job creation in Ontario, including red tape. As you know, our government keeps its commitments.

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** Later today I will be introducing a bill to reduce red tape, create jobs and further reduce the cost of government by amending two acts, the Tile Drainage Act and the Drainage Act, and by repealing the obsolete Sheep and Wool Marketing Act.

Aujourd'hui, je déposerai un projet de loi visant à alléger les formalités administratives, à créer des emplois et à réduire d'avantage le coût des opérations gouvernementales, et qui prévoit la modification de deux lois, la Loi sur le drainage au moyen de tuyaux et la Loi sur le



drainage, ainsi que l'abrogation de la Loi sur la commercialisation des ovins et de la laine, qui n'est plus utilisée.

Our amendments to the Tile Drainage Act will make it simpler for the province and the municipalities to help farmers afford tile drainage work, a most important project. The changes to the Drainage Act will reduce the administrative costs of drainage projects. And abolishing the Sheep and Wool Marketing Act will remove legislation that has not been used since 1985, when the Sheep Marketing Agency was formed.

The ministry has worked with the Red Tape Review Commission to make these changes as part of our ongoing commitment to reduce waste and to use our resources more effectively.

Last spring we also introduced the agrifood and rural business bill, which amended nine acts and repealed eight others. We have also revoked a number of unnecessary regulations and eliminated the use of 38 different forms and licences.

These regulatory reforms have three goals: to remove barriers to investment and job creation in the agrifood industry, to reduce the cost of government to taxpayers and to improve the service from government to customers.

I am pleased to be able to say that our Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is achieving those goals and helping to build a positive climate for job creation in Ontario.

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** It is my pleasure today to inform the House and the people of Ontario about the Ministry of the Attorney General's ongoing efforts to cut the red tape that individuals and businesses face in the justice system.

Last June we introduced legislative changes to 14 statutes as part of the Government Process Simplification Act. Today I am introducing further legislative changes to provide individuals and businesses with faster and easier access to the justice system.

Under the able direction of the Red Tape Review Commission, the ministry has now prepared changes to a total of 18 statutes that will further simplify processes, improve client service and administrative efficiency, and reduce legal and other costs of doing business in Ontario. I would like to highlight some of what our legislative changes will accomplish.

We will remove the unnecessarily severe restrictions on the investment of trust funds so that beneficiaries will be in a better position to have their needs met.

We will allow wider use of fax machines and other electronic means in delivering, storing and transmitting various documents and forms. This will reduce costs and increase convenience for users.

We will reduce the need for official seals in many transactions, simplifying and modernizing our business practices in Ontario.

These changes are important because they support the government's goal of a modern, more accessible and more efficient justice system and because Ontario's competitiveness in the global marketplace is directly linked to the speed and affordability of its justice system.

We are proud to be doing our part to help this government fulfil promises made in the Common Sense Revol-

ution to remove the red tape barriers to economic growth and job creation.

**Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation):** I am pleased to inform members of the Legislature today that my ministry's Red Tape Reduction Act will be introduced later today as part of the government's overall effort to eliminate unnecessary and obsolete legislation. The proposed legislation will repeal section 12 of the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture Act. This section has never been used and the ministry simply does not need it.

As well, this legislation will repeal the Parks Assistance Act, which has not been used since the 1990-91 fiscal year. The provincial interest in investment in the municipal parks covered by the PAA will continue to be protected through other legislation. Removing these unneeded measures is an example of how government legislation can be simplified without affecting stakeholders and the public. Although this is a small bill, my ministry is proud to be contributing to the efforts of the Red Tape Review Commission and to building a positive environment for job creation in Ontario.

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** I'm pleased to announce that my ministry's Red Tape Reduction Act will be introduced today, continuing our attack on red tape, waste and duplication. Now, with the help of the red tape commission, we are introducing a much broader second phase that proposes more than 100 amendments to 30 ministry acts.

Most of these changes are technical in nature, but I would like briefly to draw your attention to some of the benefits that will result from these reforms. Changes to the Corporations Act will reduce red tape and compliance costs for non-profit corporations, encouraging their efforts in helping to build stronger communities. Reform of the Liquor Licence Act will remove barriers to job creation in our hospitality industry without promoting overconsumption. Amendments to the Loan Brokers Act will increase the public's protection against unscrupulous loan brokers, giving my ministry the power to quickly shut down their operations.

Overall, these changes will make my ministry more efficient in serving and protecting the public, more effective in the spending of taxpayers' dollars and more responsive to the needs of business, which creates jobs in this province, while protecting consumers. I am pleased to offer this legislation as part of the government's continuing efforts to roll out the red carpet, not the red tape, for job creation in Ontario.

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** Today I'm introducing my ministry's second red tape reduction bill. The Ministry of Environment and Energy is committed to reducing red tape while enhancing the protection of the environment and ensuring a reliable, affordable and safe energy supply for all Ontarians.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Members opposite, I ask you to come to order. You'll get your five-minute response time.



**Hon Mr Sterling:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Obviously this bill is attracting a lot of attention.

This bill dissolves the Ontario Energy Corp and repeals the act which established it. Our decision to terminate this corporation and repeal the act was made because OEC's functions are either no longer relevant or can be provided by the private sector.

Our red tape bill also includes an amendment to the Ontario Energy Board Act giving the OEB greater flexibility in setting rates for natural gas, resulting in a streamlined regulatory process. Flexible rate-setting will encourage natural gas utilities to become more efficient and improve their productivity, resulting in shared savings with their customers.

In summary, this red tape bill will allow the government to continue to refocus on priorities and deliver results more efficiently and effectively.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** I'm pleased to announce that later this afternoon I will be tabling legislation designed to further reduce red tape in the health sector.

Since June 1995, this government has been working with our health care partners to reduce red tape and put the needs of patients first. The Red Tape Reduction Act is our second legislative package drafted with this goal in mind. By reducing red tape in the health care sector, this new bill will benefit patients, health care providers and taxpayers by merging health sector appeal boards and streamlining their hearing and review processes; scrapping over 400 unnecessary regulations and converting them to bylaws, giving professional colleges greater administrative freedom while improving accountability to their membership; streamlining and improving access to the college complaint, discipline and appeal proceedings; enhancing the ability of professional colleges to protect the privacy of their members while ensuring openness and accountability to the public; improving the ability of colleges to address suspected cases of fraud and abuse; making it easier for hospitals to acquire CAT scanners and MRIs.

These measures represent the latest action of this government to eliminate red tape in the health care sector, as we promised to do in the Common Sense Revolution. We will continue our efforts in the weeks and months to come because we all know that the more red tape we remove from the system the better it will work for all the people of Ontario.

1400

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines):** Later today I will be introducing bills under the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines to reduce red tape, maintain our commitment to protecting the environment while improving customer service and reduce administration costs and duplication.

The MNR legislation will, among other things, protect more than \$11 million a year for forest renewal, improve our planning process for crown lands, streamline forest legislation by reducing 11 acts to five, clean up the Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act and make other necessary housekeeping amendments. For example, we will make it

simpler and faster to declare a restricted fire zone, thereby providing better protection to the public during forest fire emergencies.

All the proposed MNR amendments will be posted on the Environmental Bill of Rights registry for 45 days to allow for public review and comment. We will consider all public input before these amendments are finalized.

The MNDR red tape bill will amend the Mining Act to improve the mining industry's business climate by clarifying definitions, standardizing mining claims and simplifying mining fees. This legislation will also protect environmentally sensitive areas during claim staking.

Overall, these two packages of red tape changes will affect 18 pieces of legislation and eliminate several unnecessary regulations.

Working with the Red Tape Review Commission, we have ensured that these changes are consistent with our government's commitment to reduce the cost of government while improving public services and protecting the environment.

**The Speaker:** Responses?

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** I find it very interesting that the government should choose today to introduce red tape legislation as cost-cutting measures. Most interesting today at the press conference was the fact that the very chair of this committee couldn't answer the simple question put to him by reporters, and that was: "How efficient is this? How much money are we saving?" The member could not answer the question.

The reality is that this government is looking for a good-news statement today, and you need one badly. You've had two disastrous weeks of dumping costs on to cities and towns across Ontario, and this government is looking for anything it can find to show as relevant and a priority for this government.

The Minister of Health dares to stand up and talk about red tape in the Ministry of Health while 40,000 people in Windsor don't have a family doctor. It's the same story with the Minister of Environment and Energy, after he guts environment offices across Ontario and stands today to talk about red tape.

This is a lifeline from Queen's Park to all the cities and towns. This is what he's done to the lifeline of all the cities and towns. So much for red tape.

**The Speaker:** That's a prop, and props are not in order.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** When the Minister of Environment and Energy got up to read his two-paragraph statement today, he forgot to tell us what the rest of the recommendations in that report are. It's part of the ongoing process of destroying the ministry, the ongoing process of simply turning over to industry and to the private sector full control over the environment and environmental standards of this province.

Minister, since your government has come to power, you have gutted 40% of your staff. You have one inspector for water left in the province of Ontario. You have destroyed municipal programs. You are simply turning the clock back 50 years on environmental protection.

What does the report today recommend? It reports abandoning public health and safety when it comes to the environment. It reports abandoning a commitment to



recycling. You're now going to allow industrial and commercial recycling programs to be voluntary, not mandatory. You're going to declare Ontario a dumping ground for waste from across North America. You're going to allow the private sector to move hazardous waste across public roads in this province without any controls or regulations. You're going to allow environmental polluters and people who contaminate soil in this province to walk away because the history of who has done it in the past is not going to matter under your new standards. You're going to lower standards for PCB storage. You're going to lower monitoring standards.

That's what you forgot to tell us is recommended in the rest of your report. This is part of the ongoing attack your government has made to environmental protection in Ontario, and the reason you're doing this is that you have no staff left, you have no commitment left and you have gutted your ministry. Today's report simply allows you to justify this total betrayal to the people of Ontario.

Very simply, Minister, you have no environment ministry left, you have no staff left, you have no regulations left. What would maybe serve this province is if we had no minister, because there's nothing for this minister to do.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** If the Minister of Northern Development and Mines were really interested in cutting red tape and creating jobs, he might want to bring back to the north the corporate services division to the ministry in Sudbury. He'd create jobs and he'd cut red tape. He'd also save a quarter of a million dollars in travel. He might want to bring the northern development division back to the north. He'd save almost \$100,000 and create jobs. He might want to bring the mines and minerals division back to the north. He'd save jobs, he'd create jobs. He'd also save approximately \$180,000 in travel, making a total of half a million dollars. He could save half a million dollars; he could create jobs; he could cut red tape.

He might also want to ensure that the deputy minister comes back and operates his ministry out of the north, as opposed to Toronto. He would create jobs; he would save staff; he would save costs; he would ensure that there is little red tape, as opposed to the red tape we get now.

Do you know what is most important? The Minister of Northern Development and Mines might want to create a strategy, a northern strategy, so that the people of northern Ontario don't feel betrayed.

Do you know what else he might want to do? He might want to talk to the several senior bureaucrats in his ministry who decided they would find employment somewhere else because they didn't like the direction the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines was going in. They didn't like the fact that there was no plan for northern Ontario. They didn't like the fact that this minister wasn't cutting red tape, he was increasing red tape; that this minister wasn't creating jobs, he was taking jobs away from the north; that this minister wasn't saving money, he was costing northern Ontario taxpayers more money; that this minister doesn't know what's going on.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** The government has tried to tell people that the downloading of all kinds of costs for health care and social assistance and

transportation and libraries and policing and water and sewer is all about reducing red tape and making things efficient. But people saw through that. People saw through this smokescreen, this deception, and people saw very clearly that this was all about putting costs on to municipalities, putting billions of dollars of costs on to municipal taxpayers.

When you examine this much-ballyhooed report from the government and you read through it, you can see that what the government calls red tape involves putting a whole bunch of other costs on to unsuspecting people.

For example, consider the recommendations with respect to the Ministry of Environment and Energy. The government says they should "Revoke regulation 340 requiring 30% by volume of carbonated soft drinks to be sold in refillable containers." In other words, the government is saying: "Do away with refillable containers. Just fill up those landfill sites with all kinds of non-refillable containers. Let the environment pay the cost."

Go a little further. It says, "Replace Ontario regulations...which mandate waste reduction and recycling for industrial, commercial and institutional establishments, with voluntary guidelines." In other words, this government doesn't care about recycling: "Let industry pollute. Let industry turn out all kinds of materials that can't be recycled. Let the environment pay the price while somebody makes a fast buck."

1410

We can go on further. This government says of section 43 of the Environmental Protection Act, which defines "environmental liability" — in other words, if someone pollutes and unsuspecting members of the public suffer loss and damage from that pollution — "Narrow that. We don't want corporations to be liable for polluting the environment. We don't want corporations to be liable to unsuspecting members of the public when their water, air or their community is polluted by a corporation. Let corporations offload on to the public." This is red tape?

We could go further. The Minister of Natural Resources stands up and says that he is going to put aside \$11 million to protect forest renewal. Last year \$46 million was taken from the forest management and forest protection budget. What a load of nonsense.

Then we go further. As you know, there are a number of people in this province who want to be sure that firearms are used safely. We have an ammunition act in the province. All the members of the Conservative Party voted for this ammunition act and now that they're government they're saying, "Re-examine the usefulness of the ammunition act and potentially do away with it." Again, is this red tape? I don't think so.

Then we go on further. Pay equity is to ensure that women are not pushed into low-wage jobs, that women are not paid less than men. What does this government say? "Amend relevant sections of the Pay Equity Act to exempt either small employers (fewer than 50 employees) or preferably small and medium-sized employers (fewer than 100 employees) from its application." It's okay to create wage ghettos for women. Is that red tape? I thought that was fairness. I thought that was about ensuring that women are treated fairly.



Then we go to the Human Rights Code: "Amend the Human Rights Code to require a person to establish reasonable grounds to believe that a right under the code has been infringed before he/she may file a complaint...." In other words, throw all the onus on that poor person who has allegedly been discriminated against; let the discriminator off free. That's red tape? That's called punishing the victim. I could go on. What the government proposes to the Human Rights Code is absolutely indefensible.

In the Ministry of Labour, these people want to go back to a 50-hour workweek. Civilization has fought to get a 40-hour —

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Mr Speaker, we in the opposition are wondering whether we can expect from you now or soon a ruling on the illegal government advertising —

**The Speaker:** Yes.

A point of privilege, the member for Grey-Owen Sound.

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** — the leader of the New Democratic Party when he spoke. He spoke —

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** You can't correct somebody else; you can only correct yourself.

**Mr Murdoch:** — voted for that bill.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** It was a unanimous decision of the House and you're a member.

**The Speaker:** The member for Hamilton Centre.

**Mr Murdoch:** It was not a unanimous decision; look at the record.

**The Speaker:** The member for Grey-Owen Sound, you can't correct another member's record. That's the way it goes. You can only correct your own record.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Wildman:** You didn't vote against it either.

**Mr Murdoch:** I did so.

**The Speaker:** Member for Grey-Owen Sound, please come to order.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** You see, Billy, that's what happens when you take a walk all the time.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Welland-Thorold, member for Grey-Owen Sound, I'll warn you both now, come to order.

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** Where were you when that vote was taken, Bill?

**The Speaker:** Member for Cochrane North, come to order. Thank you.

## GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING PUBLICITÉ GOUVERNEMENTALE

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** On Tuesday, January 14 and Wednesday, January 15, 1997, the member for Algoma (Mr Wildman) and the member for Oakwood (Mr Colle) rose on separate questions of privilege to express concerns about government's recent use of electronic and print media to communicate its agenda and about its use of public funds to do so. In addition, I received submissions from the government House leader.

Specifically the member for Algoma expressed concerns about television commercials in which the Premier spoke to the government's forthcoming reform agenda. The member for Oakwood was concerned about a pamphlet issued by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The pamphlet dealt with the government's program for reforming municipal governance in Metropolitan Toronto. Both members indicated that the advertising occurred in advance of consideration by the House of legislative measures that would be necessary to implement the reform agenda and in advance of public hearings on these measures. They asked the Speaker to determine whether this advertising affected members' privileges and whether it was contempt.

Further, on Monday, January 20, 1997, the member for Algoma brought to my attention a separate but related concern. According to the member, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing had issued a press release on the previous Monday announcing the government's intention to realign the responsibilities of provincial and municipal governments. The member submitted that the wording of the press release had the effect of relating the television advertisements to the legislation that the minister was introducing.

Let me begin my response to these concerns by referring to the relevant parliamentary authorities on privilege. Standing order 21(a) provides that "Privileges are the rights enjoyed by the House collectively and by the members of the House individually conferred by the Legislative Assembly Act and other statutes, or by practice, precedent, usage and custom." Examples of individual privilege are freedom of speech, freedom from arrest in civil actions, exemption from jury duty, exemption from attendance as a witness and freedom from molestation.

Although it is not clear from the submissions made by the member for Algoma and the member for Oakwood which specific head of privilege they felt was being breached, I indicated last week that I would look into the matter. In my researches I found an October 29, 1980, ruling by Speaker Sauvé of the Canadian House of Commons, a ruling that dealt with concerns about the propriety of an advertising campaign initiated by the government of Canada. In ruling that there was no *prima facie* case of privilege, Speaker Sauvé stated the following at pages 4213 and 4214 of the House of Commons Hansard:

"There must...be some connection between the material alleged to contain the interference and the parliamentary proceeding. In this regard, there is little, if any, evidence before me relating either the documents or the advertising campaign to a parliamentary proceeding."

In light of Speaker Sauvé's ruling, and after examining all the circumstances, I find that a *prima facie* case of privilege has not been made out with respect to the concerns raised by the member for Algoma and the member for Oakwood. The television commercials, the ministry pamphlet and the ministry press release do not attempt by improper means to influence members in their parliamentary conduct and do not impede freedom of speech in this place, nor do they relate to a parliamentary proceeding.



The member for Algoma and the member for Oakwood also asked the Speaker to determine whether the same circumstances amounted to contempt. Erskine May explains the concept of contempt in the following terms (at pages 115, 121, 124 and 125):

"Generally speaking, any act or omission which obstructs or impedes either House of Parliament in the performance of its functions, or which obstructs or impedes any member or officer of such House in the discharge of his duty, or which has a tendency, directly or indirectly, to produce such results may be treated as contempt even though there is no precedent of the offence. It is therefore impossible to list every act which might be considered to amount to a contempt, the power to punish for such an offence being of its nature discretionary....

"Indignities offered to the House by words spoken or writings published reflecting on its character or proceedings have been constantly punished by both the Lords and the Commons upon the principle that such acts tend to obstruct the Houses in the performance of their functions by diminishing the respect due to them....

"Other acts besides words spoken or writings published reflecting upon either House or its proceedings which, though they do not tend directly to obstruct or impede either House in the performance of its functions, yet have a tendency to produce this result indirectly or by bringing such House into odium, contempt or ridicule or by lowering its authorities may constitute contempts."

That is what Erskine May said on contempt.

1420

I want to say to members that I have also reviewed two important rulings mentioned by the member for Algoma last week. The first ruling was by Speaker Fraser in the Canadian House of Commons on October 10, 1989.

The situation that Speaker Fraser was faced with was as follows: The Department of Finance had caused to be published an advertisement that stated that "on January 1, 1991, Canada's federal sales tax system will change" and that a goods and services tax "will replace the existing federal sales tax." The advertisement then outlined specific proposed changes.

After assessing the situation from the perspective of privilege, Speaker Fraser proceeded to assess it from the perspective of contempt. In the course of ruling that there was no *prima facie* case for breach of privilege or for contempt, he identified the differences between the two in the following terms:

"All breaches of privilege are contempts of the House, but not all contempts are necessarily breaches of privilege. A contempt may be an act or an omission; it does not have to actually obstruct or impede the House or a member; it merely has to have the tendency to produce such results. Matters ranging from minor breaches of decorum to grave attacks against the authority of Parliament may be considered as contempts."

In ruling that there was no case for contempt, Speaker Fraser appears to have accepted the submissions of government ministers that the government had never intended the advertisements in question to be anything more than "informational" and that it had never been "the

government's intention to suggest that legislation would not be submitted to Parliament for debate." Members will find this important ruling at pages 4457 to 4461 of the House of Commons Hansard for October 10, 1989.

The member for Algoma also referred to a March 28, 1994, ruling of Speaker Warner in our own House. In that case, the government had caused an open letter to be published in newspapers in the Ottawa-Carleton area. The letter, which appeared under the signature of the Minister of Municipal Affairs, could be interpreted as suggesting that a bill that had only received first reading would become law by a specified time. After reviewing Speaker Fraser's ruling and two precedents from our own House, Speaker Warner indicated that a *prima facie* case had not been established.

Let me now turn to the application of these authorities to the impugned advertising. With respect to the television commercial and the ministry press release mentioned by the member for Algoma, I am of the view that they do not raise a *prima facie* case of contempt. On the contrary, the commercial does nothing more than explain in a simple and general way the government's philosophy and its broad reform agenda. As for the press release, it is worded in an innocuous way.

However, I am very concerned by the ministry pamphlet, which was worded more definitely than the commercial and the press release. To name but a few examples, the brochure claims that "new city wards will be created," that "work on building the new city will start in 1997," and that "the new city of Toronto will reduce the number of municipal politicians."

How is one to interpret such unqualified claims? In my opinion, they convey the impression that the passage of the requisite legislation was not necessary or was a foregone conclusion, or that the assembly and the Legislature had a *pro forma*, tangential, even inferior role in the legislative and lawmaking process, and in doing so, they appear to diminish the respect that is due to this House. I would not have come to this view had these claims or proposals — and that is all they are — been qualified by a statement that they would only become law if and when the Legislature gave its stamp of approval to them.

In the two rulings I have referred to, Speaker Fraser in Ottawa and Speaker Warner in our own House had some strong words for ministers or the government of the day on the subject of government advertising.

Speaker Fraser stated he would not be as generous in future in a similar situation and that, "we are a parliamentary democracy, not a so-called executive democracy, nor a so-called administrative democracy." Speaker Warner stated "that this action has come very close to contempt, and in the future the minister should exercise more caution and exhibit greater respect for the proprieties of this House."

Considering the fact that Speaker Warner issued this very stern warning to the very ministry that I am dealing with today, I would consider this ministry to have been given fair warning.

It is not enough for yet another Speaker to issue yet another warning or caution in circumstances where the wording and circulation of the pamphlet appear on their



face to cross the line. I say in all candour that a reader of that document could be left with an incorrect impression about how parliamentary democracy works in Ontario, an impression that undermines respect for our parliamentary institutions.

For these reasons then, I find that a *prima facie* case of contempt has been established. At the end of this ruling, I will entertain a motion with respect to the matter of the ministry pamphlet raised by the member for Oakwood.

On a separate but related matter, the member for St Catharines (Mr Bradley) expressed concerns on Tuesday of last week about the unequal access to advertising resources as between the government and the opposition. He asked whether the Speaker had any jurisdiction to restrict the government from disseminating allegedly self-serving, partisan advertising.

At this point in my ruling, I want to express some personal concerns about the propriety of public funds being used to advocate, through advertising, a particular position on a matter that is before the House. Let me be clear: I am not speaking here about politically paid for advertising, but rather about funds that are contributed to by every Ontarian, regardless of his or her political view. Personally, I would find it offensive if taxpayer dollars were being used to convey a political or partisan message. There is nothing wrong with members debating an issue and influencing public opinion; in fact, it is part of our parliamentary tradition to do so. But I feel that it's wrong for a government to attempt to influence public opinion through advertising that is paid for with public funds —

*Applause.*

**The Speaker:** Order — which, I might add, are not available to the opposition — instead of through debate in the House.

As I say, these are my personal views. While I sympathize with the member for St Catharines, I do not have the jurisdiction to examine the propriety of such campaigns unless they raise a matter of privilege or contempt, a subject I have already addressed.

In his submission, the member for St Catharines also made mention of the Board of Internal Economy. If the member wishes to place some kind of request before the board, he is free to do so and the board can address such of his concerns as fall within its jurisdiction.

In closing, I thank the member for Algoma, the member for Oakwood, the member for St Catharines and the government House leader for bringing their various concerns to my attention.

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** A point of privilege, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** No, I'm not looking for points of privilege or points of order. They're not in order. I think I was very clear in my ruling.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** It doesn't matter. I'm looking to the member. I expressed in my ruling I would be looking at the end of this to the member for Oakwood for a motion. Member for Oakwood.

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** Mr Speaker, I guess the fundamental issue here is in terms of equal information —

**The Speaker:** Member for Oakwood, I'm looking for a motion.

**Mr Colle:** My motion is that there's a motion of censure before this House that the Minister of Municipal Affairs is in direct contempt of parliamentary democracy and that we move a motion of censure against the Minister of Municipal Affairs at this time.

**The Speaker:** I just want to be very clear and it's going to be very straightforward. Member for Oakwood, please take your seat. I will not take too much more time. You moved the motion; you asked me to deal with it. I now am looking for a motion properly put in writing before this House, nothing less.

1430

**Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside):** Have a five-minute recess.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** — longhand; I'm not suggesting you can't do that. I'm saying I need a motion.

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We are asking for your assistance in this matter, as we're really looking for —

**The Speaker:** I say to the member for Lawrence, the ruling was requested by the member for Oakwood and it's been ruled. I now need the motion. Nothing else is in order. There's no time for recess; nothing's in order.

My patience is wearing very thin. It's incumbent on a member who moves this particular action to have a motion ready. Now, it's not ready.

**Mr Cordiano:** Well, we just need a few minutes to put something in writing.

**The Speaker:** Okay, I can see it's — with all due respect to the member, that's a ridiculous argument. When you put the point of order, it's supposed to be ready at that time.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Mr Colle moves that the government be censured by the House for its contemptible advertising campaign and that the matter be sent to the Legislative Assembly committee for consideration. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

**Mr Cooke:** What about the debate?

**The Speaker:** Oh, I'm sorry. There's debate; that's right. Okay, you're right. Just to be clear, it's the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carry? Okay, debate?

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Just before we begin debate, I would like to request that you make copies of your ruling available to members of the Legislature, at least to the House leaders and leaders, so we have that to refer to as we move into the debate.

**The Speaker:** Yes, that's fine. I can do it as quickly as I can. Member for Oakwood.

**Mr Colle:** As you know, Mr Speaker, one of the constant concerns that have been raised by the opposition and the people of Metropolitan Toronto is not so much whether the megacity legislation was good or bad, but they are very concerned that due process and the fundamental democratic rights of the citizens of this province were being violated by the way this bill was introduced and by the way this bill was basically being rammed



down the throats of the people of Metropolitan Toronto without due process.

I think that is why this pamphlet that the Minister of Municipal Affairs issued day to day, on almost the first day the bill was introduced, demonstrates the utter contempt the minister has for the right of the people of Metropolitan Toronto to have a say in their future. At the heart of this matter is that the minister totally disregards and is disregarding the right of the people to have both sides of the story. The issuance of this pamphlet, the spending of hundreds of thousands of taxpayers' dollars on only one side of the story, is what is most disturbing about this legislation and the way it has been introduced.

The introduction of Bill 103, the megacity bill, is not the issue by itself. The critical issue is how this province works, whether this is a parliamentary democracy or, as you said, an executive government that is functioning here. That is what is most upsetting, because the people of Metropolitan Toronto have been very categorical in saying, "All we want is to be able to have our input in giving both sides of the story." What the Minister of Municipal Affairs has done quite categorically is said: "We do not care what you say. We do not care what the other side is. We are going to ram this bill through without any attempt to give the other side."

I can see that what is at the heart of the matter is that the people of this metropolitan area, 2.5 million people, are saying, "Maybe there should be change and maybe the legislation before us should be debated, but it cannot be debated fairly when the government is able to expend all its resources to give just one side of the story." That is the most fundamental objection I think the opposition has and the people of Metropolitan Toronto have to the way the Minister of Municipal Affairs has conducted himself.

This digs deeper than political boundaries or politicians; this digs right at the very heart of our democracy and at the very principle of fairness and balance. Certainly the opposition is trying to give the other side, but it cannot do so if the government pre-empts the opposition and pre-empts the other side with a fait accompli, as they indicated in their pamphlet.

1440

What is essential here is that if the government were at all fair, the hundreds of thousands of dollars it has spent on this pamphlet that went to every door in Metropolitan Toronto — this went to a million households. It went to businesses, to homeowners, apartments right across Metro, the six municipalities. It wasn't just one little pamphlet that went into selected areas. It went right across Metro without anybody having an opportunity even to discuss or debate it, and you can see what the rationale was: that the government would get their side of the story out before anybody else had a chance. The government wanted to give an impression that no matter what this House did, no matter what the opposition said, no matter what the ratepayers said or what the citizens of local democracy are saying or what ordinary citizens are saying, this was a done deal. That is what is so fundamentally upsetting to the people of Metropolitan Toronto.

Many people would even agree that maybe there is some merit in some of the government structure being

changed. Many of them have told me personally: "I don't care whether this is good or bad. What I care about is my right to have a say in the future of my city, whether it be through a referendum or getting information I want. I can't stand to have that denied me." People, again, who are in the Conservative Party, have said to me, "I am a Conservative but I am against this government and this minister who is ramming this thing down the throats of Metropolitan Toronto with my tax dollars without giving me a say." Is anything that is more fundamentally wrong than that? I don't know whether there is at this point in time, because the people of Metropolitan Toronto are saying loud and clear now that the future of their city, their neighbourhoods, their economy is at stake.

Tomorrow the board of trade will question where this minister is going with the impact on the city as a result of his pronouncements. People all over Metro, in East York, in York, in Etobicoke, are saying: "This megacity bill, what will it mean to me? The government is assuring me it will be nothing but savings." As you know, to show further contempt, the minister produced that rent-a-consultant report from KPMG, which placed his fanciful list of savings that has been proven to be nothing but a smokescreen. That was another expenditure of \$110,000 by this minister, where this consultant reaffirmed his pipe dream of a megacity. The public was never given an attempt at getting a consultant or paying for a consultant, like the minister did to give just that one side of the story. If you look at that consultant's report by KPMG, you won't see very much information there, which tells you that the amalgamation of the six cities may cost you more money. All this report did was say it's a saving, reinforcing this pamphlet that the minister paid for.

Where does the ordinary citizen get a say in this? The minister has hundreds of thousands of dollars. He's got thousands of staff. He's got consultants he's hired who are working on this megacity legislation. What does the ordinary ratepayer in North York or the community person in East York have at their disposal to fight the megacity legislation? The minister has made nothing available to them. All they've gotten is the minister's one-sided story, and that is what has been so disturbing about this whole megacity madness, that this minister has basically unequivocally said, "Take it or leave it."

The most astonishing thing —

**The Speaker:** Order. Member for Oakwood, I would just caution you that you speak to the motion that you put. The motion is clearly a referral to committee with respect to the — and I understand that there is some latitude there and I will provide some latitude —

**Interjection:** And a censure.

**The Speaker:** And a censure, yes, but the thrust of the motion is to committee and, like a bill, you must refer to the motion.

**Mr Colle:** Referring this bill to committee I think will give members of this Legislature the opportunity essentially to see what they can do to rectify this wrong, because there has been a grievous wrong perpetrated by this minister on the people of Metropolitan Toronto. That is undeniable.

I would hope the committee will investigate a variety of different options of how this wrong will be rectified,



because there has to be fairness in its deliberation. In other words, this cannot go unnoticed, because the damage has been done. In other words, the minister has already expended hundreds of thousands of dollars giving his side of the story, so the committee will hopefully investigate ways of rectifying the wrong.

Perhaps what the committee should look at as an option is for the Conservative Party of Ontario, the Conservative Party that the Premier of this province belongs to, to reimburse the taxpayers for this wrongful advertisement. Let's get the bill in terms of what it cost the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. I think that bill should be referred to committee, what the cost is of the distribution to a million households, the printing of a very expensive pamphlet, what the cost is of that. The committee should be given that information and should investigate how the taxpayers might be recompensed for that expenditure.

Second, the committee should look at ways of allowing ordinary citizens in Metro to have a say on the other side of the debate or on ways of improving the legislation or making recommendations, because up until this point ordinary citizens don't have the finances the minister has. As I said, the minister has at his disposal an army of consultants, an army of civil servants who have been putting out their side of the story.

I would hope, in referring this to committee, that the committee will prudently look at ways of ensuring that this type of abuse of power — and that's what it is; it's an unmitigated, categorical abuse of power of this minister and the whole ministry, and this cannot happen again. As you mentioned, Mr Speaker, this same ministry engaged in a similar activity previously.

A third thing I would like to refer to the committee in this deliberation is how the citizens of Ontario could ensure that there are safeguards built in so that this type of misuse of taxpayers' dollars does not occur again. What is so astonishing is that this whole exercise was supposedly about saving taxpayers' dollars. This whole exercise was about elected officials spending too many taxpayers' dollars. Here we have the very minister who is saying, "There are too many taxpayers' dollars mispent," misspending taxpayers' dollars. He and his ministry and his advisers blatantly misspent taxpayers' dollars to get across one viewpoint on the most sweeping municipal legislation ever seen in this province.

The impact on two and a half million people in Metro is not going to be an impact just for a year or two. For the next 50 years this legislation will impact on the shopkeepers, on the homeowners, on the tenants, on the community groups, on all the people who make this one of the greatest cities in the world. They will be impacted by this legislation. That's why the committee that is looking at this referral has to examine how this wrong can be rectified so that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the other ministries —

**The Speaker:** Order. I appreciate that there's much discussion in the House right now with respect to the circumstances, but we still have to have the House carry on in an orderly fashion. Members for Hamilton East, Wilson Heights, Windsor-Sandwich and others, not specifically you but others, it has to maintain some

decorum. If you're going to meet, please meet outside. It's near impossible for me to hear the comments being made.

1450

**Mr Colle:** I appreciate that, Mr Speaker. I think the most telling words in this were told to me personally by the former mayor of Scarborough, Joyce Trimmer. "Madam Mayor," I said to her, and I still call her that, "when you were on this commission, what did you discuss in terms of the alternatives? What was your final recommendation?" By the way, the minister, the Honourable Al Leach, was on that committee. Joyce Trimmer told me: "We categorically stated we were going to advocate the retention of local governments. The six local governments would be retained." That's what Joyce Trimmer told me. A lifelong Conservative, an excellent mayor of Scarborough, a councillor for 20 years, that's what she told me.

She said, "You know what perturbs me the most is not whether what they're proposing is totally different from what they did before the election, but it seems that this government and the Minister of Municipal Affairs have a total disregard of debate on this issue." That he is denying the right of people to have a say in the referendum, that that was being ridiculed, is what upset Joyce Trimmer the most. She said it had nothing to do with the fine points of municipal government. She said what was most upsetting to her, as a lifelong Conservative, was that this minister was totally disregarding input or debate.

I would hope the committee of the Legislature that's going to examine this blatant breach of due process and respect for this House and respect for the taxpayers will look at this and maybe bring in the former mayor of Scarborough and have her address this issue, what it means to her as a citizen and as a person who has served in local government. The committee must examine that and bring witnesses forward when we refer this to it.

I would ask that the committee that this is going to be referred to bring forward David Crombie and Jane Jacobs. Let them come forward and talk about due democratic process at the municipal level. They should come and give advice to the committee on how this wrong can be rectified, because it's not a matter of one pamphlet. This is a matter of how this government works. It's a matter of how communities work. It's a matter of how the opposition has at least an attempt to have an equal voice — not even an equal voice; at least have a voice in the decisions that are going to be made.

I would hope that the committee will be made up of members of the Legislature who will take into account the impact this type of approach has on our processes here, on how we introduce legislation. Maybe we can learn a very valuable lesson when we refer this to committee, because the most astonishing thing to me when the bill was introduced was that the bill categorically said that as of the day of introduction — I remember it well, December 17, the day I call the day of infamy, when this bill was introduced in this Legislature. The bill said that the bill was in effect and that the trustees were in power that very day, that these handpicked trustees, bureaucrats, were going to run a city of two and a half million people the day the bill was introduced.



The very next day I got phone calls from right across my constituency saying: "We've received some government pamphlets that say the megacity is a done deal. It's right there in the government literature."

So here we have legislation introduced giving power to faceless bureaucrats on December 17. The bill was introduced that day, and I think that's further proof of the contempt that minister and that ministry have for the democratic process.

The committee should bring the deputy ministers forward. The committee should bring forward the lawyers who drafted this legislation and bring forward the lawyers who looked at this legislation and how it basically is part and parcel of the contemptuous approach this whole ministry has had towards the right of people to be heard.

I would say that maybe the committee should widen its investigation, that this investigation and referral should look at this whole operation of this ministry. There is something that stinks in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. That stench can be smelled from Kenora to Cornwall, not only in Metro. I hope, in referring it to the members, my colleagues in this House, you will bring forward further questions about how this ministry has got to this point of having such contempt for this House, for this provincial Legislature and the decades of parliamentary democracy it represents.

**Interjection: Centuries.**

**Mr Colle:** Centuries of parliamentary democracy. There must be something fundamentally wrong with this ministry that it could have such contempt not only for the people of Metro; I think this kind of disregard should be taken to heart by everybody. It's not just about those of us who live in Metro; this contempt is a slap in the face to all of you all across Ontario. Whether you live in Ottawa, Wawa or Cornwall, this kind of contempt is going to affect you. Right now they're knocking on our doors in Metro, they're denying us the right to participate in our city's future. What is to say that they won't do the same thing, that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs won't disregard due process in Hamilton, Burlington or Manitowadge?

It's not as if you're just fighting for the citizens of Toronto to have a say; you're fighting for your basic democratic rights. That's what is upsetting. That is why 1,500 people want this referred to committee. That is why this contemptuous act has to be referred to committee, because the 1,500 people who were at Metropolitan United Church last Monday night are most upset about due democratic process.

Last night there was another meeting in the Annex in Toronto where 500 people said: "We want a say in our future. We want to know what the cost of this is going to be. We want to know whether it's going to work in terms of neighbourhoods, in terms of economic viability." People all over Metro are standing up for everybody all over Ontario.

I know some of my colleagues on the Tory back bench in their heart of hearts know this is wrong. I know it's difficult in a big, majority government to stand up to the Premier, but I ask you all, whether you're a Conservative, Liberal or NDP or whatever, to ensure that when this is referred to committee you come and follow the proceed-

ings, because they're not just proceedings about misuse of taxpayers' dollars by the Minister of Municipal Affairs; they're proceedings that go to the very heart of what makes this province the envy of a lot of countries and a lot of jurisdictions, because what has made this province great is that little people, in little neighbourhoods in little towns and in big neighbourhoods in big towns have had equal access to information.

This minister and his ministry should be brought to task and should be brought before this committee of the Legislature where the committee can ask the question: How much did you spend on this advertising, just one side, this propaganda? That's what it is. What deputy minister signed off on this? Did the Premier's office partake in the decision to pre-empt the process?

Maybe we should bring in the Premier's office to this too, because I know the Premier has taken a lead on the megacity deal. I would ask the committee, when it's referred to it, to ask the Premier to come and appear before it and find out whether his staff signed off on this pre-emptive propaganda campaign and whether they were party to it and ask the Premier whether he's happy with the way this municipal affairs department operates and whether other ministries operate the same way.

**1500**

As you know, in referring it to committee what we have to look at is all the major pieces of legislation that are going to affect everything from education to health care to taxes in Ontario and whether those other ministries, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Community and Social Services, are also doing things in an improper way and misusing taxpayers' dollars to pre-empt the democratic process. When referring it to committee we have to bring in the other ministers and all their communications branches to ensure that they are not perpetrating the same wrong and misusing hundreds of thousands of taxpayers' dollars to push this agenda on to the taxpayers of Ontario.

The committee we're referring it to must widen its scope as it looks at this unprecedented — this is history here today — anti-democratic Ministry of Municipal Affairs. That is what is at the heart of the matter. We have to make sure the committee examines whether other ministries are plagued by the same disease, that's what we have to do, because there is more than just one ministry at stake here. There's a whole attitude, and the attitude is manifested in this propaganda they put out. I would hope that the committee members, in their wisdom, will widen and be very prudent in their deliberations, because there is no doubt about it, in this very difficult day we might also see some remedies.

The committee will maybe make some interesting recommendations that will ensure that these safeguards are put into place. When you have a majority government, whether it's this one or future ones, the message the committee should be able to give is that just because you've got a majority government, that doesn't give you the right to deny public participation.

You can introduce legislation, you can eventually pass it because you've got the numbers, but no matter how big your majority is, the public still has a right, the opposition has a right, to get their story out. You can't just take



for granted and assume that this is an executive democracy where, just because the Premier's office or one of his ministers decides that this legislation is appropriate, that is the rule or that is the law.

Again I remind you that if you look at the legislation itself, it is a very frightening agenda that basically says: "When we introduce legislation, it's a done deal — December 17. There's no use fighting it, there's no use resisting it. We have a majority, we have the three editorial boards on side and we can do what we want."

I think the ordinary people have said: "Whether the editorial boards support a policy or whether the Premier supports a policy or whether the minister thinks it's the greatest thing, we citizens can still have a voice. We still have the right to debate, we have the right to question the impact of legislation." There can be nothing more fundamental than that. I know a lot of people will ask, "When it goes to committee, what will the committee really do?" But I think the committee can look at ways in which it can preserve the rights of the minority, basic democratic rights of taxpayers, basic democratic rights of groups, and sometimes we may disagree with these small groups.

They may not be the groups that support the majority agenda, but the committee should look, in its wisdom, at ensuring that when a ministry undertakes the most massive change in the history of this province in local government, the committee has to ensure that no matter how odious the group is, how contrary it is to the government, that group has a right to at least present the alternative view. That is what the committee must examine.

Unequivocally, from day one, December 17 onwards, there has been bulldozing, total disregard, even ridiculing of anybody who questioned this. The three major dailies of Toronto should be ashamed of themselves for going along with this agenda, especially the Toronto Star, a newspaper that was a muckraking paper. They should be ashamed for not allowing public debate on this thing.

That is what is most upsetting: We have to have the other side. Maybe there will be total amalgamation in the end, but it's got to be done with debate and an opportunity for the other side to be heard, and this is what the committee has to look at. No matter how powerful the daily newspapers are, no matter how powerful the media are, no matter how powerful government is, our government cannot deny the right of the opposition and ordinary citizens to have a say. Maybe we will learn a lesson today like we've never learned before, that people, whether they are in corporations or run a barber shop or are out of work, have a right to have a say.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** This is an unusual debate today and I want to outline what I think is the essence of the contempt we have before the House. I've had the time to look at some of the background, and what I think is particularly important here is that we all recognize —

**The Speaker:** To the leader of the third party, as I said to the member for Oakwood, what is under debate is the motion. I just want to be clear. You'll refer back to the committee etc.

**Mr Hampton:** Yes.

**The Speaker:** That's fine. Thank you.

**Mr Hampton:** This matter of government advertising and government brochures — this is the one in question — has been considered by the Speaker in this House before. To quote Speaker Warner, after looking at a similar situation involving the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, the Speaker was very clear in delineating the situation. He said, "I want to say to the minister that this action has come very close to contempt, and in the future the minister should exercise more caution and exhibit greater respect for the proprieties of this House."

When we look at this pamphlet, it's very important to note the attitude the government takes, the attitude the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of Municipal Affairs take. The Minister of Municipal Affairs takes the view, as expressed in this pamphlet, that legislation has already been passed to permit the appointment of trustees, that legislation has already been passed to permit the takeover of six existing cities. The Minister and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs take the attitude that it doesn't matter what the public may think, it doesn't matter what the public's views may be, it doesn't matter what debate may happen here, it doesn't matter what questions may be raised, it doesn't matter what points may be brought out. It almost takes the point of view that because the Minister of Municipal Affairs has made a decision, this has happened almost by decree.

What is so absolutely contemptible about that is that it takes the position that democratic debate is merely some sort of formality, that going out and listening to the public and what the public has to say is merely a formality, that any questions that may be raised are merely a formality; that all these institutions of democracy that people have worked so long and so hard to develop and protect are irrelevant as far as the Minister of Municipal Affairs is concerned; that all these democratic institutions — the right to come here and to debate, the right to come here and to raise issues, the right of the public to be involved in hearings, the right of the public to put across their view, the right of the public to consider the points raised, the right of the public to question the points raised — are all irrelevant. The minister has decreed how it shall be.

1510

I want to go through this pamphlet to point out some of the elements that I think are most contemptible: most contemptible of democracy, most contemptible of our democratic institutions. If you read the second page, without any legislation having been passed, without any public hearings having been held, without the public ever being consulted, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and this government say, as if it's a fact, "The next regular municipal elections will be held on schedule in November — at which time Toronto voters will elect their new unified city council." It then says, "We will take 1997 to prepare for the new government in 1998. Throughout 1997 a transition team..." No legislation approving a transition team, no hearings on how this transition team should be appointed, no legislation providing for the appointment of a transition team, but the minister says a transition team will prepare for the new city government.



Further, a "board of trustees will oversee local spending decisions." There has been no legislation creating these trustees. There has been no legislation empowering these trustees. There has been no public debate about whether these trustees are a part of our democratic institutions, where their powers flow from, what the constraints on their powers are. This minister and this government assume you can do this by decree. Democracy doesn't matter. Parliament doesn't matter. Legislative approval doesn't matter. Approval by the public doesn't matter. You simply do it by decree.

I could read on, and I will read on because I believe there are other instances in this pamphlet which illustrate how profound the contempt is.

The transition team: Again, no legislation has been passed creating this transition team. There has been no debate about what powers this transition team shall have. The minister, the ministry and the government say, "The transition team will announce the" new "ward boundaries in early 1997." They will simply announce it — no need of public consultation, no need of public discussion, no need of ever talking to the people who are going to be governed; you simply do it by decree.

I could go on, and I will go on because there is so much more in this brochure that is contemptible of democratic institutions, that is contemptible of this Legislature, that is contemptible of the will of the public. But I'll save that, because I want to talk a little more broadly about why this is so contemptible.

Democracy is not simply a case of: "We won, therefore none of you matter any more. We're simply going to do whatever we feel like, whatever our whim is, whatever we want to do whenever we want to do it." That is not democracy. Democracy is real debate. Democracy is consultation with the public. Democracy is talking to the public, asking questions, checking the debate, listening to the debate and actually changing the legislation where points are raised, where legitimate concerns are raised, and where problems are shown to exist, amending the legislation.

But if I read this pamphlet, the government is again, the minister is again, the ministry is again making it sound as if there is no room for debate. There is no room for raising legitimate questions; there is no room for challenging.

Is it a good idea to have trustees? Is it a good idea to simply appoint three trustees? How is it that when you've had democratic elections, when mayors and councillors have been democratically elected, you can simply appoint trustees? That's a very serious matter. Ordinarily in our law, trustees are only appointed when someone has done something wrong or when someone is incapable of acting or when you feel that something has somehow gone askew. There is no room for debate, according to this pamphlet, as to what should be the limits on the power of these trustees. There is no room to debate or question whether or not there should even be these trustees. There is no room to debate whether or not appointment of these trustees is fundamentally in opposition to our democratic traditions. There's no room for any of that. None.

That is what is so offensive about this, that the government assumes that because on a certain day in June 1995

they happened to win an election, from now on democracy doesn't matter; from now on, talking to the people doesn't matter; from now on, issues raised by the opposition in this Legislature don't matter; from now on, legitimate points that are raised don't matter. This government, this minister, this ministry take the attitude that once elected, they may do whatever they wish, and they may even announce it to the public before there is any legislation which approves or empowers them to do that.

There is more that in my view is contemptible about this. Not only has the government taken the view that there is no need for debate, there is no need to involve the public, there is no need to consider opposition points of view, there is no need to consider whether or not what they are doing is in accord with democratic principles; not only does the government take that view, but the government also takes the view that they can, without anything further, simply use taxpayers' money to then shove this down people's throats. In this case we are talking about hundreds of thousands of dollars of taxpayers' money, hundreds of thousands of dollars of citizens' money, to then take what amounts to rule by decree and say to people: "This is how it shall be and this is how it shall be and this is how it shall be."

This is contempt upon contempt. This is contempt heaped upon contempt. The first bit of contempt is this, saying to the people who live in Metropolitan Toronto, "This is how it shall be." Without any debate, without any discussion, without any consultation of the people, without any consideration of the public will, "This is how it shall be." That, in my view, is the first contempt.

But above and beyond that, even more serious, is that the minister then takes the view that without any approval, he can then take this point of view that has been handed down by decree and spend hundreds of thousands of dollars of citizens' money reinforcing, telling people over and over again: "This is how it shall be. There is no need of debate. There is no need of democratic consideration. There is no need of further exercise of the institutions of democracy. The minister has made a decision. This is how it shall be. Money shall be spent to reinforce the minister's position. Money shall be spent to command public respect and public obedience of the minister's decision. There is no need of any discussion, debate, any public involvement whatsoever." In my view, that is contempt heaped upon contempt for this democratic institution and for all of the institutions of democracy in our society.

1520

I want to go over the points again, because I feel somehow that this government won't listen, that this government is not interested in listening to people. As we've started this debate, I think it's important to note that our understanding is that this government has planned further advertising campaigns, going into the millions of dollars, without any legislation being passed, further advertising campaigns which will essentially say to people: "It has been decreed by the minister. This is how it shall be. The minister is now commanding your obedience." None of this has been authorized by the passage of any legislation; none of this has been sub-



jected to debate with the public; none of this has entertained opposition points of view or views being raised by the public — none of it.

The government simply believes, this minister simply believes, this ministry simply believes that they can make a decision without any public involvement, decree that decision and then reinforce that decision with millions of dollars of citizens' tax money, commanding their obedience, directing their obedience, informing them, "This is how it shall be."

I fear, Speaker, that not only do we have this contempt of this and, I argue, the further contempt of the advertising, which is engendered and created in order to command obedience, but we will see further examples of this government using millions of dollars of citizens' money, telling citizens: "It shall be thus and so. You have no need for debate. You have no need for discussion. We have no need for public hearings. This is how it shall be, because the minister has decreed it."

There are, I know, governments in the world that operate that way. There are, I know, governments in the world that believe that debate in the Legislature is unnecessary, that believe that consultations with the public are unnecessary, that believe that questions, opposition points of view, alternative points of view are all unnecessary. There are governments in this world that behave and operate that way. Thank God we have not had them here. Thank God that in our heritage of government, in our heritage of democratic process, we have not operated in that way.

In this contempt I fear that a very wrong direction is at stake. The tendency here, if it is followed, is one that frankly is harmful to the whole democratic fabric of this province, is one that in my view has too much in common with the behaviour and activities of governments in other parts of the world which believe that the public doesn't matter, which believe that democratic debate doesn't matter, which believe that all of these things are irrelevant, that it can all be done by decree by the minister. The minister can then go out and tell the public: "This is how it is. This is how it shall be done. Fall in line. Your obedience is commanded."

It's not that way. It can't be that way. In a province that is steeped in democratic tradition, in a province where what happens here, the questions that are asked here, the answers that are given here, where what the public says, where public involvement, where all these things matter, we simply can't allow that to happen.

I want to go back and go into the motion a bit more deeply, "that the government be censured by the House for its contemptible advertising campaign and that the matter be sent to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly for its consideration."

I want to dwell a bit on why I think this is so important. I want to argue that this is so important that this happened. This is, in my view, an event of historic proportions, what has happened here, and in order that the minister and the ministry not proceed down this lane any further, in order that we are reminded and the minister and the ministry are reminded that the public matters, that public involvement in debate matters, that the proper passage of legislation through this House

matters before the government can take a position of saying, "It is decreed it shall be," in order that all that can be looked at and the minister and the ministry can remind themselves of that and the government can take guidance from it, I think it's very, very important —

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I'm going to ask for your ruling on this motion. I'm going to ask that you rule whether this motion is in order. I ask that on the basis that in your comments in your ruling you have expressed concern with regard to the ministry pamphlet, you have expressed concern with a particular pamphlet and you gave some examples of your concern in that regard. As well, you referred to a situation in 1994, I believe it was, in terms of a ruling of the previous Speaker with regard to information pertaining to the Ottawa-Carleton situation, as I can recall at that time, in which case the Speaker did not rule for *prima facie* contempt, but in your view that was a warning for the ministry.

In the motion that's before us, and I think you are most generous in your consideration of the matter, because the member for Oakwood did have an opportunity to put a motion forward, and while it was quite obvious that he was not prepared for a motion, you allowed great latitude in terms of timing and during that period of time he did put a motion before this House, and that is the motion we're dealing with at the present time, and the motion indicates that the government be censured — it doesn't refer to the ministry. In your comments you specifically referred to the ministry in question: "be censured by the House for its contemptible advertising campaign."

1530

Mr Speaker, your comments I think were very extensive with regard to various facets of the advertising campaign and your ruling was quite clear that it was not the advertising campaign you were making the ruling on with regard to a *prima facie* contempt, that your ruling pertained simply to a pamphlet, not to the advertising campaign. Consequently the way this motion is phrased does not address your specific concern, the specific concern you ruled on, but is unquestionably much more broadly based.

Second, it refers to the government, and as such, Mr Speaker, I would submit to you that it is more in the nature of a non-confidence motion, that it is not in the nature of a motion to deal —

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** If the members opposite want to have a point of order, you may follow, but it's very important that I hear the government House leader.

**Hon David Johnson:** I think quite clearly that not only does the motion not deal with the ruling you made — it's much broader — but that the ruling is in the nature of a non-confidence vote.

I would submit to you that non-confidence motions are certainly permissible. They are guided by section 43(a) of the standing orders, which indicates:

"In any session, upon proper notice, the official opposition is entitled to not more than three motions of



want of confidence in the government; the third party is entitled to not more than two such motions, and any other recognized party to one."

Clearly the proper notice has not been given, consequently it would not be in order for a non-confidence motion to be placed today. Mr Speaker, by the wording, I would submit to you that's precisely what we have. I would ask that you give consideration to that and rule that this motion is out of order.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I have listened carefully to the government House leader and I would submit to you some further comments.

First I would ask that the handwritten copy of the motion moved by the member for Oakwood be produced, because I understand that particular handwritten copy, while it was written in haste, did refer specifically to the pamphlet. The member for Oakwood can speak to that, but I believe that the handwritten copy of the motion dealt specifically with the pamphlet. There was some difficulty in reading it, which I understand, but that is the case.

As to the question of whether or not the motion is in order because it deals with the government, the fact is that the ruling of the Speaker dealt with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and referred to Speaker Warner's previous ruling which criticized and warned that ministry. I think it's not a stretch to point out to the House and to you, Mr Speaker, that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is part of the treasury bench and is part of the government. In censuring the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, in effect that is censuring the government.

If it is more proper for the motion to speak specifically to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, I would submit to you that once you have dealt with this point of order, our caucus and my leader will be prepared to move an amendment, which I have written out here, to deal specifically with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

As to the question of want of confidence and whether this is a want of confidence motion, I think it is pretty clear in the precedents that the only motion that is clearly a want of confidence motion is one that is put under the rule that allows the opposition parties to put want of confidence motions, two want of confidence motions per session, and which are worded specifically that way. It has also, under the precedents, been accepted that most votes against government money bills, budget bills, are considered want of confidence.

But even in that particular case there is precedent in the House of Commons, where the federal government, as I recall — I'd have to get the exact date — lost a government money bill and did not treat that in itself as a want of confidence motion. In fact, the government then reconvened the House and put a specific confidence motion before the House and the government was upheld by the House of Commons in that particular vote.

I think it is simply a matter of opinion, not of rules or of precedent, whether this motion is a want of confidence motion.

I would also submit to you, Speaker, that the matter being put to you by the government House leader is not

within your purview. I don't think it is for the Speaker to rule on whether a matter is a matter of confidence. That is something for the government to decide and for the House to decide. It is not a matter for the Speaker.

With those comments, Speaker, I would hope that you would rule that this motion is indeed in order and let debate continue.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** On the question of whether this is out of order and the government sees this as a want of confidence motion, Mr Speaker, clearly it is not a want of confidence motion. If a government — I'll say this theoretically so I don't inflame the debate this afternoon — were looking for an excuse to vote against such a motion, it could try to tell all and sundry that it is a want of confidence motion.

Clearly, as I look at the motion, it is not a want of confidence motion; it is a motion of censure for a specific activity of the government. Of course we know that the government has to approve all the advertising that takes place, not a ministry; a government as a whole approves all the advertising a government undertakes. For the government House leader to suggest this is a want of confidence motion — I would see it as simply an excuse by a government to try to vote against a motion which clearly has the support of many in this province, if not entirely in this House.

I would hope that your ruling would, as I think logic would tell us, logic according to some of us on this side perhaps, logic would tell us that this is not a want of confidence motion and should be put before the House at an appropriate time in its present order.

**Hon David Johnson:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It has been indicated that this may be outside the realm of your jurisdiction. I submit to you, as I'm sure we're all aware in this House, that the rule on whether a motion is in order is surely within your jurisdiction.

Mr Speaker, I would submit to you that whether the motion had been intended to be written differently and different words were intended at some point in time is really not the issue before the House. The issue before the House today is the precise wording of the motion before us, and the words before us are quite clear: "that the government be censured," which I would still submit to you is a non-confidence motion, "for its contemptible advertising campaign," which I will reiterate is not relevant to your ruling, which was specifically with regard to a particular pamphlet.

In terms of considering this matter, what future amendments may or may not develop I would think would not weigh too heavily on your mind either. I would ask you to make the ruling in terms of the motion actually before the House at this instant and whether it's in order. If you rule that it's out of order, I would submit that we should proceed with the orders of the day. That in fact would be question period.

1540

**Mr Cordiano:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think the House leader is undermining his own argument, because the motion given to the Speaker, as written out in the handwriting of my colleague the House leader for our side, clearly referred to "pamphlet," as pointed out in your ruling.



**The Speaker:** Order. I'm going to deal with this directly up front, member for Lawrence. I understand what you're saying. Please be seated for a moment.

This is what I received. This is exactly how I received it. Now, it was difficult to read. This was sent out to be copied. Your copy is identical to how the motion read. Let us make no mistakes about that. This has not been changed nor adjusted from the moment I received it. I don't want to go there.

**Mr Cordiano:** Mr Speaker, I was not implying that the document was altered. The reference was to a pamphlet, but if you're talking about "advertising campaign," in effect a pamphlet is part of an advertising campaign. That point has to be taken into account. I think the argument the House leader is making is very flimsy.

Furthermore, with respect to this being a non-confidence motion, it does not comply with what needs to be put before the House in order to qualify as a non-confidence motion. I think your ruling would be well received on this part to uphold the motion. If that's not the case, we would look for an opportunity to amend the motion.

**Ms Lankin:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker, and I will be brief: I want to say that if the motion we are debating stems from a ruling, a finding of contempt of the government towards this House, this point of order is a further demonstration of that.

There are two specific points I want to address. First of all, with respect to the wording of the motion, as to whether it refers to a "pamphlet" or an "advertising campaign," your pamphlet is an advertising campaign. If you want, with semantics of that sort, to attempt to frustrate this House from dealing with an unprecedented ruling of a Speaker with respect to a finding of contempt —

**The Speaker:** To the Chair.

**Ms Lankin:** — then you are demonstrating further contempt for this House and for the Speaker's ruling.

The second point I want to make is with respect to whether it would be in order for a motion to flow from your ruling that would censure the government.

Mr Speaker, you put it to the member for Oakwood to have the right to put forward a motion, and it is his motion. It is clearly not a motion of want of confidence. It is not written in the form of a motion of want of confidence.

But I want, just for a moment, to set the context of questions that have been asked in this House with respect to this pamphlet and advertising by this government, which have been defended by both the Minister of Finance, who is the Deputy Premier, and the government House leader, who is also the Chair of Management Board and Minister of Health. These government ministers have stood in their place and spoken on behalf of this government in defence of this particular advertising campaign, that being this pamphlet, as government policy, government expenditures, and have defended that expenditure.

I would put to you that even if there were some rational reason behind the government's point of order at this time, even if there were a shred of doubt in your mind, it should be set aside by the fact that these senior

ministers on behalf of the government have spoken in defence of this and have taken ownership of this on behalf of the government. I put to you that I think that's not the threshold. You don't have to reach to that point to find a ruling on this.

This is a motion put by a member whose right it was to put a motion, given your finding of contempt on the part of the government. The motion flows, this government has a choice of how they will vote on that, and the people will judge at that point in time, watching how you vote.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** Point of order, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** I'm prepared to hear points of order forever, but the fact remains that it would be helpful if you could offer me any new information on this point of order. I think it's important that we deal with this in a timely fashion. If you're going to stand, it would be helpful if you could get to the point.

**Mrs McLeod:** That was my point for rising, Mr Speaker. Although I'm not sure I have a specific suggestion to offer to you, I did want to make the point that the motion put forward by the member for Oakwood was in response to your ruling. It's a ruling which we respect. The motion is intended to follow through on your ruling, and we would like to be able to have a motion which is clearly in order so we can proceed with the debate and in fact with the business of the House. If the government House leader has some suggestions to make as to ways in which the motion could be amended so that it would be considered by all parties in the House to be in order and be ruled in order by yourself, we would certainly appreciate those recommendations from the government House leader.

**The Speaker:** That's always in order.

Did you have another point of order?

**Mr Hampton:** To be helpful to the government, if the government finds some offence or wants to find some offence, perhaps we can amend it so that the word "government" is deleted and replaced by —

**The Speaker:** Leader of the third party, I appreciate what you're doing, and that can be done, if it is so chosen, between the three parties. It is not at this time appropriate to begin that negotiation process, because I really don't want to know about it, quite frankly.

I have a very important ruling to make and I would request that we recess for 30 minutes. I'm going to review the input I've gotten. I would ask the House leader for the third party, the House leader for the official opposition and the House leader for the government to stand by, please.

*The House recessed from 1546 to 1616.*

**The Speaker:** I would like to take the time to deal with the points of order raised by the government House leader as well as various members of the opposition.

Firstly, to deal with the motion itself, that the government be censured by the House with respect to naming it as a government as opposed to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, my opinion is, or my ruling is, that is the same. The minister stands in his place on a number of occasions as the Minister of Municipal Affairs and speaks for the government. I don't see any difference in that particular fashion.



Secondly, as far as a confidence motion is concerned, that is a decision that has to be taken by each individual rather than myself. I have no jurisdiction over whether something is a confidence motion or whether it is not a confidence motion. That is a decision that has to be taken by the government itself, the House leaders or the opposition parties, either/or.

The advertising campaign is respecting the pamphlet. I see it very clearly; it is one, the same. The advertising campaign, in my opinion, is the pamphlet, and that is what in fact we are discussing today. That is in fact how I see it. Wherever this goes, it gets referred to committee or however you handle this, the direction or the ruling I've given is that the advertising campaign deals directly with the pamphlet.

Fourthly, I'm not going to suggest to any member of this House that this is a well-written motion; it's not. But what has to happen for a Speaker is, is the motion put in good faith? Yes, I believe the motion was put in good faith. Therefore, I find the motion in order and we'll continue debate. The leader of the third party has the floor.

**Mr Hampton:** I was speaking about this pamphlet, and I want to continue speaking about this pamphlet, because as I said, in my view this is the source of the contempt. As I said just before you came back in the House, Speaker, this contempt has, in my view, other incidents of contempt built upon it.

In my respectful submission, some of what the government is saying here is argument. The government is trying to argue a certain point of view. If the government wanted to argue this point of view before legislation was in fact passed by the House and passed third reading and become law, if the government wanted to spend citizens' money on arguing a point of view before anything has become law, in my view the proper democratic approach and the proper public policy approach would be for the Conservative Party to put out a pamphlet arguing a point of view. Before legislation has passed this Legislature, before the public has been consulted, before legislation has passed this House, for the government to use citizens' money to go out and pay for what I think is just a point of view — I don't think there's any conclusion on this, certainly not any conclusion that's been reached by this House — for the government to use citizens' money, taxpayers' money to promote what is just a point of view, an argument, without any of that having been approved by this House, I think is contempt. I believe it shows contempt for taxpayers, shows contempt for citizens, shows contempt for democratic process, shows contempt for the lawmaking process in this House, and no government should get involved in that, no government should.

To use another example of how this could have been done, if government members from Toronto had wanted through their own MPP budget to advance a line of argument, if they had wanted to report to their constituents, "I believe this will be good and I believe this is the way to go," in my view you could have used your mailing privileges as a member of the Legislature to advance that point of view and to start to develop that debate — but not the government. For the government to confuse its partisan political belief with what may or may

not be the outcome in law, and then to use citizens' money, taxpayers' money to simply say, "It is done, and no debate matters; no passing of law, no passing of second reading, no passing of committee debates, no hearing from the public, no passing of third reading matters," is contempt. It's contempt for this institution, it's contempt for the processes of this institution, it's contempt for the public, it's contempt for the lawmaking process, it's contempt for what I regard as important democratic principles.

But this goes beyond taking a partisan point of view and then trying to say, "This is now law and we're now telling you about what the law is," because the government has also done something else in here. If you read this pamphlet carefully, the government is actually saying, "Thus and so will happen in 1997." Without any laws being passed, "Thus and so will happen," the government says. The government says the transition team will announce the ward boundaries. Well, there has been no legislation in this House that approves of a transition team. There has been no legislation passed by this House that gives a transition team any authority. The government says in this that there will be trustees, that trustees are going to be appointed and trustees will do all these things. There has been no legislation passed by this House that gives these trustees any authority, none. There has been no legislation passed by this House that gives these trustees the capacity to do what they assume they can do out there right now. That is quite incredible.

To give a further example, without having legislation pass this House, without having the public comment on that legislation, without having any debate about that legislation, the government assumes it can set up trustees, that trustees will be in place and that trustees will be able to go to municipal councils and give direction to municipal governments — elected municipal governments, responsible municipal governments, municipal governments that frankly have all the integrity our law gives to them, that have all the lawmaking powers our democratic process provides for — that trustees, who have no legal approval, no legislation approving them, could do this is quite simply incredible. It is unbelievable.

To reflect on this and take it just a step further, let's assume there was a board of education somewhere that took a different view of what educational policy should be. Would the government simply say, "We're bringing in legislation today; we're appointing trustees even though this legislation hasn't passed, even though there's been no debate about this legislation; we're simply wiping out the powers of that duly elected and responsible school board"? That's incredible, unbelievable, unprecedented. That a government would presume to have that kind of authority and that a government would presume to exercise that kind of authority without having legislation pass this House is quite incredible.

I say, Speaker, and I say this especially to the government members, yes, some of you are members of cabinet and are therefore members of the government, but others are not members of cabinet, are not members of the government. You are elected to hold and uphold democratic principles and the rights of this House. I say to you that what is being done here and what is being attempted



here cuts across your democratic rights and the democratic rights of this whole Legislature, and none of you should support this.

**Hon David Johnson:** We certainly respect the ruling of the Speaker in this matter. This is an issue that we do feel needs some clarification. I might say that the government is under extreme pressure, if that's the proper word. There are people out there in the province of Ontario who want the government to communicate, who want information about various projects, about various upcoming pieces of legislation. I'm sure that each and every member of this House, in terms of their dealings with their constituents, in terms of dealings with the people of Ontario, have had constituents and people request information. I will say that in my experience with municipal government and with provincial government, that's very common, that people want information about what it is that's being proposed or what it is that's being considered.

Having said that, at the same time, obviously there are parameters around how that information should go out. Those parameters have been tested in other cases. I think the Speaker in his ruling referred to a number, referred to the federal government's consideration of the GST issue. I think it was in 1989 that there was a GST ad that was run, and certainly if there's a piece of legislation and an issue that people wanted information about, GST would be foremost over the last decade or so. In that case the Speaker ruled that there was not a prima facie case for contempt in that particular situation. The Speaker also referred to the ruling of the Speaker of the House in 1994 on newspaper ads pertaining to the Ottawa-Carleton area. Again, these were viewed I guess as being pieces of information.

So there have been various governments in various jurisdictions that have had the need to get information out, but at the same time the parameters need to be tested, what sort of information can be put out and in what content the information can be put out.

1630

The Speaker has ruled in this particular case. We respect the ruling of the Speaker, but as a government we understand the need that this matter be considered further. Certainly the government will be hoping to send, and will be voting in favour of sending, this matter to the Legislative Assembly committee so that there can be consideration of this matter. I think that is only appropriate.

At the same time as I say that, the Speaker, in his ruling on whether this matter was in order, whether the motion was in order, made it clear that it was not his place to rule whether this was a non-confidence motion. The way it is presently phrased, he indicated that he could not rule whether this was a non-confidence motion or not. That he said would be left to the members of this Legislature, to each of the parties, to determine.

There is a concern, obviously, so we cannot support the motion as it is before us. This government wants the people to be involved. This government wants information to be out. This government wants public hearings on all of the bills that are before us. This government is working for those public hearings, there will be public hearings and people will get information. There will be public hearings and they will be allowed to participate.

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** You guys know when to stop.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** Your members don't show up in public hearings

**Hon David Johnson:** Notwithstanding the comments from the members opposite, firstly I would wish to establish that this government is making attempts to convey information, to set up a public process, to have the legislation considered, and we certainly will be pursuing that agenda.

But having said that, the ruling deserves respect. The ruling raises the question of, in what context can information go out? This issue has been addressed in the past, in other forums, but I would say it's time and this government says it's time that the matter be dealt with by the Legislative Assembly. We seek the advice of that particular committee.

I am going to move an amendment, Mr Speaker, that the motion be amended by deleting after the words "That the" — and those are first two words — the words "government be censured by the House for its contemptible advertising campaign and that the matter" — those are the words that would be deleted, Mr Speaker — and that the following be substituted therefor, "Speaker's finding of a prima facie case of contempt in the matter of one pamphlet issued by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs referenced in his ruling of January 22, 1997," so that the motion would now read, "That the Speaker's finding of a prima facie case of contempt in the matter of one pamphlet issued by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs referenced in his ruling of January 22, 1997, be sent to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly for its consideration."

I think that is an appropriate motion. The government is most interested. The government wants clarification. There should be clarification in terms of government rules around government —

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Take your seat. You have moved the motion. Mr Johnson has said, "I move that the motion be amended by deleting after the words 'that the' the words 'government be censured by the House for its contemptible advertising campaign and that the matter' and that the following be substituted therefor: 'The Speaker's finding of a prima facie case of contempt in the matter of one pamphlet issued by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, referenced in his ruling of January 22, 1997,' and by adding after the word 'consideration' the following words, 'and that the committee be directed to recommend guidelines to be applied to the development of government communication products to ensure that such an incident is not repeated,'" so that the motion will now read:

"That the Speaker's finding of a prima facie case of contempt in the matter of one pamphlet issued by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, referenced in his ruling of January 22, 1997, be sent to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly for its consideration and that the committee be directed to recommend guidelines to be applied to the development of government communication products to ensure that such an incident is not repeated."

I will take a 10-minute recess to consider this motion.



**Hon David Johnson:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I think you've been given the wrong motion. That wasn't the motion I read.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Obviously I was given the wrong motion and I will now read again what has been said:

"I move that the motion be amended by deleting after the words 'that the' the words 'government be censured by the House for its contemptible advertising campaign and that the matter' and that the following be substituted therefor:

"That the Speaker's finding of a prima facie case of contempt in the matter of one pamphlet issued by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, referenced in his ruling of January 22, 1997, be sent to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly for its consideration."

I will now listen to your point of order.

**Mr Wildman:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I would ask you to consider very carefully and rule whether or not this motion is in order, because my reading of the motion is that it is contrary to the original motion. It removes the whole question of censure. It doesn't say anything about censure. In my view, if the government or any member of the House does not wish to support a censure of the government, then they have the choice —

**The Deputy Speaker:** Just a minute, please. Would you stop the clock.

**Mr Wildman:** They have the choice of voting against the motion. You cannot amend the motion to delete the most important substantive part of the motion. It is contrary therefore to the original motion, and therefore, I think, Mr Speaker, with respect, should be ruled out of order.

**Hon David Johnson:** Mr Speaker, I would submit to you that the operative part of the motion is that the matter "be sent to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly for its consideration." That's the operative part. My amendment leaves that intact, does not amend that part. My amendment simply amends the prelude and I think clarifies the situation in that regard. I would submit that since my motion does not amend the main operative part, it should be ruled in order.

**Mr Bradley:** On the point, Mr Speaker: I think clearly the amendment that is being proposed is contrary to the gist of the motion, the strength of the motion that was proposed. It's clear that it's contrary. The government is trying to weasel out of the censure of the government in this case. It's simply trying to fire it away to some committee and hide it and is trying to narrow it as much as possible so that they get away from dealing with the other related matters of the huge government advertising campaign, clearly partisan, blatantly partisan, that they're carrying on. I think on that basis there should be no consideration that this would be in any way in order.

1640

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think in your ruling you should take into account that Speaker Stockwell has already ruled that the wording of this motion is in order; and further, that "government" can be taken to mean the minister, and the ministry specifically; as well that the advertising cam-

paign specifically refers to the pamphlet; and further, that the motion was put forward in good faith. When we see the government trying to come out from under it, yes, the basic meaning, but also, in a manner which is disrespectful to the ruling of the previous Speaker, it should not be upheld.

**Ms Lankin:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I want to add my voice to those who have said that this amendment should be ruled out of order because it is contrary to the intent and spirit of the original motion.

Speaker Stockwell's ruling was very clear in a finding of guilt, guilt of contempt. The process that flows from that is that the Speaker provides a right to the member, the member for Oakwood in this instance, who raised the original point of order and point of privilege which led to Speaker Stockwell's finding of contempt. That motion from that member contained two elements: an element of a referral to committee, yes, but also an element of a censure of the government's action, of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the government and their action, for having been in contempt of this House. It is a further demonstration of the contempt of this government that they think they can amend the original member's motion to remove any censure of their actions. A finding of guilt has been made. This motion is about a sentencing and a penalty.

It would be absurd in this circumstance that the government, with its majority, should be able to overrule the rights of the nature of a motion put by a member whose point of order has been found to have been founded in, and in which there has been a finding by the Speaker of, contempt. I would ask you to please, seriously, take the time to review this. I think this is a further action of contempt on the part of this government.

**Mr Cordiano:** I think really and truly that the government House leader's attempting to wiggle off the hook on this one is reprehensible. We're trying to deal with this matter in good faith to bring this to a resolution that is agreed to by all parties. We're trying to deal with a very serious matter. It is the very essence of how we deal with this House.

I can recall this government wanting very seriously to deal with the matter of decorum with regard to this House, yet today the House leader deems it appropriate to try and undermine the very ruling of the Speaker of this great assembly. I find that completely unacceptable, and there cannot be good faith on the part of the government when they attempt to deny the rights of the minority to be heard through the ruling the Speaker made. That is in essence how this Legislative Assembly works, and works properly. When you begin to do that, when the might of a majority government attempts to do that, you undermine the very essence of the democracy that is this Legislative Assembly. It is reprehensible behaviour on the part of the House leader and not called for, and it does not help matters before this House for the government to continue in its arrogant vein.

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** I think the attempt of the government in this particular situation is to try to have a full hearing with regard to this matter —

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** Are you saying the Speaker is wrong?



**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** Therefore it is our desire to have this particular matter considered by the Legislative Assembly committee, which is normally charged with dealing with procedural matters.

The Speaker has already said, with regard to the House leader's question from my party, the government party, that the motion before us can be interpreted by various members of this Legislature either as a confidence motion or not as a confidence motion. This government or this party, this member, is not going to support a motion which may or may not be interpreted as a confidence motion at this time over one pamphlet which was produced by one member of this government.

Therefore our attempt is an honest attempt to try to get this matter in front of a committee so that members of this Legislature can consider all the matters with regard to this matter, which is the desire of the member for Oakwood, who put this forward.

Our attempt here is to deal with this matter and not try to shut off the debate, because if we are forced, or if I am forced, to a position of voting on the bare motion of the member for Oakwood, I have no choice but to vote against it. I would like to have the opportunity —

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. Take your seat, please. I am trying to be fair with everyone, to give you an opportunity to voice your opinion. It's the turn of the member for Carleton.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Therefore, I would just say in summary that we would like to have a full hearing of this matter. However, the member for Oakwood's motion does not allow us that opportunity, and therefore we are putting forward this motion in good faith to have a real hearing with regard to the matter, and we are only offering it in that vein.

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Orlino):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I listened very carefully to the arguments that have been put forward by members of the government, who are attempting, in my view — and I hope that you will rule, Mr Speaker, that their amendment is out of order, because it is my view that what they are attempting to do is to distort the intent of a substantive motion before the House by deleting the censure of the government.

That censure is the integral part of that motion. To attempt to delete it by amendment I think is contrary to the rules of order, and I would say to those who have spoken in support of it that you do not do, in my view as a parliamentarian, democracy any favour by attempting, rather than accepting a landmark and important ruling of the Speaker of this Legislature, who is attempting to safeguard democracy, the rights of the people of this province to hear truth and not partisan propaganda and the rights of this Legislature to consider legislation without fear or favour that the people of this province are going to be improperly influenced.

The ruling of Speaker Stockwell was clear and the motion by the member for Oakwood clearly in good faith censures the government. I ask you to rule out of order any amendment which deletes that censure, because it runs contrary to a good-faith amendment that has been

put forward on behalf of the official opposition, who frankly believe in the democratic process and procedure of this Legislature and respect the ruling of Speaker Stockwell in his attempt to alert the government to the fact that what they are doing is improper, as the traditions of this Legislature are clear.

**M. Gilles Bisson (Cochrane-Sud):** Sur le point d'ordre, je voudrais faire clair que ce que le gouvernement essaie de faire dans cette situation est très clair.

Le Président de la Chambre a pris une décision faisant affaire avec la situation que l'on a vu aujourd'hui, c'est-à-dire que le gouvernement payait de l'argent gouvernemental pour faire des publications. Le Président de la Chambre a dit que le gouvernement est en mépris — c'est le mot clé — du processus législatif de l'Assemblée. Le Président a demandé qu'une motion soit mise en avant de la Chambre par le député, M. Colle, dans laquelle il a demandé que le gouvernement soit en mépris par cette action, et il a demandé qu'une certaine considération soit mise en avant du comité législatif.

Le gouvernement vient dire aujourd'hui, à travers le chef parlementaire, qu'il veut faire un amendement à la motion, et cet amendement-là changerait complètement l'intention de la motion.

Mon point d'ordre, Monsieur le Président, c'est qu'on ne peut pas, dans mon opinion, selon le Règlement, changer l'intention d'une motion qui était mise en avant, et tout ce que le gouvernement essaie de faire, c'est trouver une manière de s'arranger politiquement, là où ils se trouvent aujourd'hui, étant embarrassés par leurs actions comme gouvernement. Je vous demande de prendre cela en considération.

1650

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** Mr Speaker, I also rise on a point of privilege. When Mr Johnson rose to present a motion on behalf of the government, he said that his motion was in no way changing the main motion as put forth by the member for Oakwood. It is my view that in order for any member of the House to introduce a motion to amend it must do one of two things: (1) It must add to the main motion, or (2) it must subtract from the main motion, and in doing so, the mover intending to make an amendment must not remove the positive intent within the main motion.

It is my view that even the minister said he does not intend to change the main motion. By introducing his motion to amend as he did, he created a negative intent in the main motion and therefore it is not acceptable.

An amendment, in order to be acceptable, can do two things, and I repeat: to improve the main motion by adding or subtracting, but not to eliminate the positive intent of the motion, thus making it irrelevant. Therefore, I would submit that it is totally unacceptable and shouldn't be taken into consideration.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Speaker, please, can I prevail upon you to consider some of the very special circumstances surrounding this debate regarding Mr Colle's motion this afternoon? First, we are clearly dealing with an unprecedented occurrence in this Legislative Assembly, where the gravest and most serious expression of — a finding of contempt has been found against the government. It has been a finding, sir. It has



been a finding. It is now the reality. The Speaker has clearly stated that the government was in contempt by virtue of its utilization of taxpayers' dollars in the context of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs' pamphletting of the city of Toronto and I presume the greater Toronto area.

Please consider what the Speaker said. He said very clearly, and this is on page 17 of what he released as his written comments: "For these reasons, then" — and he referred, I tell you, to the previous warning that had been given to this very same ministry — "I find that a *prima facie* case of contempt has been established. At the end of this ruling, I will entertain a motion with respect to the matter of the ministry pamphlet raised by the member for Oakwood."

The Speaker will recall that there was a brief pause in the sitting of the House and the Speaker, Speaker Stockwell, indicated that his hands were tied; nothing more was going to happen until a motion was put on the floor, whether it took two minutes or five minutes or 10 minutes or 15 minutes, that the House was bound by his ruling to then consider his ruling. A motion of course was put forward and was found in order by the Speaker.

I would ask you to consider first the timing of this amendment by the government House leader. He didn't raise this amendment immediately after Mr Colle's motion was put on the floor, nor did he raise it in a reasonable period of time after Mr Colle put it on the floor. I ask you, Speaker, to consider whether or not this amendment, which takes the debate of Mr Colle's motion out of this House and defers it to some point in the future — we don't know when or where — to a legislative committee about the *prima facie* finding of contempt, is simply a pathetic and desperate attempt to sweep this matter under the rug, whether it has brought an element of crass partisanship into this debate where the government is merely trying to do damage control.

I submit to you, Speaker, that you have to protect this assembly in the course of its debate over Mr Colle's motion from that partisanship and from these very blatant and transparent efforts to merely whitewash, to sweep this away. This is before the assembly. The assembly is challenged with the responsibility to deal with it. The amendment — and this has been referred to, but I reinforce these comments — so fundamentally alters the nature of Mr Colle's motion that it contradicts Mr Colle's motion. In that respect alone, it is not an acceptable or suitable amendment and cannot be found in order.

The standard here has to be higher than, let's say, in the regular course of business, because we're not in the regular course of business. We are considering the most profound finding that could be found about the government by the Speaker. We're considering a finding of contempt. I say to you that this puts on us a responsibility to debate the motion and to vote on it.

The challenge I put to government members isn't to try to find ways, by utilization of pettifoggery, to divert attention, the public's attention and the House's attention, from this matter, but the responsibility and the challenge for government members is to consider this matter fairly, recognizing their obligation to their constituents but also to their roles as members of this Legislative Assembly. They can be partisan if they wish, but I tell you, Speaker,

you have to use your powers to ensure that the partisanship the government is exercising now is removed from the debate and removed from the scene.

I urge you, Speaker, to find this amendment to be one that is just frivolous; one that has as its purpose the whitewashing, the sweeping under the rug of this matter; one that has as its purpose nothing more than partisan political damage control; and one that, as has been indicated, reinforces the contempt this government has for this assembly, for the people of this province, for the voters and taxpayers of Ontario, and for long-established rules and traditions.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I have listened to quite a few points of order. I will listen to one more and then after that I will recess for 10 minutes to reflect and to make a ruling.

**Hon David Johnson:** Mr Speaker, I am going to save you the trouble of making that deliberation. On behalf of the government, I put this amendment forward in good faith. This was a suggestion that I had put to the House leaders very early on this afternoon in this debate, that the government would support this matter going to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly. I fully indicated the government's support for it at that point in time, because the government wants clarification. In the spirit of cooperation, I put forward an amendment that I very much hoped we could all support.

Speaker after speaker has said that this is non-partisan, that this needs to go back, that this needs to be considered. That was the spirit I put the motion forward in. But obviously this is not being received in the spirit of goodwill; it's going to require a ruling on your behalf. I will withdraw the amendment. As a result, I think we should get on with the debate and get on with dealing with this matter as the government wishes.

**The Deputy Speaker:** You had 18 minutes to continue in your debate. Would you like to continue in your debate?

**Hon David Johnson:** Yes, thank you. I do have 18 minutes, but I don't intend to fully use those 18 minutes.  
1700

Speaker Stockwell, now that you're in the chair, I think I would wish to reiterate, number one, the point that the government does respect your ruling and does wish clarification. The government is genuinely concerned, the government is genuinely interested in having clarification on how publications should be dealt with and the government would wish this matter to be considered at the appropriate committee, in the appropriate forum, and to be clarified.

This government also recognizes your statement with regard to whether this is a motion of non-confidence and your advice that this wasn't your position to be ruling in that regard.

The government is well aware of your concerns with regard to this pamphlet. You specifically reference your concern to the pamphlet in your ruling. You specifically mentioned a couple of examples from the pamphlet, and that there was no disclaimer in terms of the information contained in the pamphlet. The government wishes to have this issue clarified and we feel we will find the appropriate way to do that.



I will only say, again, on behalf of the government that there was no desire to show contempt for this House. In fact, your ruling does not indicate that there was contempt; your ruling indicates that there may be a case for contempt, a *prima facie* case.

**Mr Pouliot:** Hey, read the God-damned thing. Can't you read? He said contempt.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. The member for Lake Nipigon, please come to order. The member properly has the floor. He has not said anything that would be out of order. He can speak as he feels and this outburst will not help the situation. I appreciate it's a difficult issue, but we need decorum if this is going to continue.

**Mr Pouliot:** Yes, but he's contemptuous.

**The Speaker:** The member for Lake Nipigon, I appreciate what you have to say but it's not in order. The government House leader has the floor. I ask you to give it to him. Government House leader.

**Hon David Johnson:** Mr Speaker, I'm sorry for that outburst from the other side, but you did rule a *prima facie* case for contempt and I think we should understand what the meaning is: that there may be but that there is not definitely ruled to be.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Members opposite, you may well disagree with the government House member, and we are in debate, and as we go in rotation you may put your position on the record. It doesn't mean the government House leader can't put his position on the record, and if that is his definition, that is his definition.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** That isn't what he said.

**The Speaker:** Member for Dovercourt, that is his interpretation and he has every right to do that in this place, and this outburst doesn't help. Government House leader.

**Hon David Johnson:** Mr Speaker, finally, I wish to ask for unanimous consent in this House. Because the Minister of Municipal Affairs of course is the topic and central to the ruling and to this issue, the Minister of Municipal Affairs would wish to rise at this time and speak to this matter, and I ask for unanimous consent that he use the remainder of my time.

**The Speaker:** It has been requested and although it's not unusual as the speaker goes forward, I think it would be very useful if unanimous consent could be given to allow the Minister of Municipal Affairs to make what I would consider a short comment with respect to this issue. He will, of course, use the remainder of the government House leader's time. Agreed? Agreed. The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I would like you to know that I respect your ruling and I assure you that any act of contempt was through inadvertence and not intent. And I wish to assure all members of this House, very sincerely, that the pamphlet in question was designed to respond to public requests from citizens for information about our proposals, not in any way to show disrespect for the legislative process or anyone in this House.

On December 17, I introduced Bill 103 for the consideration of this Legislature. The pamphlet was released two days later to explain our legislation, not to suggest that it was not necessary. To the degree that disrespect for the legislative process has been infringed upon, I apologize, Mr Speaker, to you and to every member of this House. I can only at this point again assure all members that this government and this minister would never knowingly commit an offence against the authority or dignity of this Parliament, nor would this government or this minister ever take any action which would obstruct or impede the Legislature in the performance of its functions.

Mr Speaker, I wish to assure you that the government will review all of the contents of all of our communications products in light of your ruling.

**The Speaker:** Thank you to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Further debate?

**Mr Bradley:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to speak on what is an unexpected debate this afternoon on a matter of a ruling by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, a ruling that I would refer to as a landmark ruling in the House today because it deals with, I believe, an issue which has long been festering before the assembly, the issue of government advertising, with the specifics being on this bill.

On the motion itself, the contention by the government a little while ago that this was a non-confidence motion is pure nonsense and obviously was an effort on the part of the government of Ontario, through the government House leader, to find an excuse to vote against a censure motion of the government.

It is a landmark ruling on the pamphlet but also, in the context of the entire Speaker's ruling, indicates that the Speaker is concerned about the whole issue of the use of ministry money, that is, taxpayers' money, to purvey clearly partisan, self-serving propaganda on the part of the government. This is the not the first time this matter has been raised in the House. When I raised it last week and this week with members of the government, we got the usual answers and the usual suggestions that this is not to be construed as self-serving government propaganda. I think any independent observer looking at this ad or the television ads that we are seeing or the ads in the newspapers for such things as the tax cut would clearly conclude that this is partisan advertising.

The government did the right thing — I want to say that when the government does something right, it does something right — when it had the Progressive Conservative Party pay for a certain ad that was put out with the Premier in it, an ad with the Premier reading a teleprompter in an arena, with a message wanting to sound sincere and so on. That was paid for the Progressive Conservative Party, and while I know people will make the argument, "Isn't that partially subsidized?" at least the people who contributed to the Progressive Conservative Party would approve of that particular advertisement.

I'm interested that the Progressive Conservative Party would have \$800,000 to spend on such an ad after coming out of a campaign. Nevertheless, in fairness to the government I differentiate that from the government advertising. As well, the government caucus is provided



with funding, as is the opposition, to put out information as it sees fit and I've never objected to the government caucus doing that.

What I object to is the use of taxpayers' dollars by various ministries to put out clearly blatant, political, partisan, self-serving advertising at the expense even of people who disagree with the government. That means that those of us who are in the opposition who pay taxes have to pay for this self-serving government advertising.

This pamphlet is simply part of an entire campaign, so whenever anyone watching this debate this afternoon turns on a television set and sees one of those government ads, he or she should be outraged at the fact that the people of this province are paying for those ads. Never mind what they're saying now; just mind the fact that a so-called penny-pinching government that would never spend money on anything unnecessary, they would say, is squandering hundreds of thousands of dollars, into the millions of dollars now, on such self-serving ads. This is clearly in that category; the Speaker has found that.

1710

I noted in the Speaker's ruling that he mentioned a previous Speaker, Mr Warner. Mr Warner had given warning, not simply to a previous government when it was raised in the assembly, but to all governments. Quite frankly, I think what the Speaker has done with this ruling this afternoon is send a message not only to this government but to future governments in this province as to the advisability and legality and the ethics of purveying clearly partisan propaganda with taxpayers' dollars.

We know the Ministry of Municipal Affairs has a campaign of some \$650,000 in television advertising in conjunction with this. We know the Ministry of Education has the same thing. The Ministry of Health was going to do it, but suddenly they've withdrawn that because the heat is on and because some of us were noting that they were closing hospitals but were going to have money to conduct a government advertising campaign. You've been caught with your hand in the cookie jar. This is one of the most embarrassing days for this government — in fact, I think the most embarrassing day — since the Bill 26 humiliation that took place in this House. It should make the government extremely cautious.

The Speaker was careful in this. Each day I was hoping we could get a ruling and we were asking each day for a ruling. The Speaker, wisely and upon reflection, took time to look at all the issues. He didn't, frankly, come out clearly and say that everything I had raised in the House, or my friend Mr Colle or my friend Mr Wildman, was necessarily going to find his agreement or his stamp of approval. He didn't say that. I wish he had, but he didn't, and I accept that ruling as I accept all Speakers' rulings in this House.

There was the issue dealt with as well of the unfairness, not only of the squandering of money at a time when you're firing people out the door, like the people who work in our postal service downstairs, many of whom have disabilities, either developmental disabilities or physical disabilities — it's not that — "We've got to save money that way, but we've got money to spend as a government on self-serving advertising." I hope this brings an end to that.

I believe that from this ruling, although the Speaker did not say this and I won't put words in the Speaker's mouth or rewrite the statement he made to the Legislature, clearly what is suggested, in my mind, is that the government should withdraw today, immediately, all ads paid for by ministries of a self-serving, partisan nature. All of those ads, all of that propaganda should be withdrawn immediately.

I believe the Progressive Conservative Party should pay back the taxpayers of Ontario for what I consider to be a Conservative Party advertisement. I believe the Conservative Party should pay for this and reimburse the taxpayers of this province. I believe this government owes an apology — and we've had it from the Minister of Municipal Affairs — to this House but also to the people of this province for the squandering of their money on self-serving government ads and for the unfairness demonstrated.

In a democratic system you have 82 votes. You're always going to carry a vote in this House. The only way it would not carry is if a sufficient number of members of the government decided they would either be absent or vote against the government. You always have 82 votes in this House. You're going to carry anything you want, so you have a lot of power on that side of the House.

I sat in a government that had 95 seats, even more power than you have, and I think any government, I don't care who they are, has to take into consideration the views of the opposition and be fair in the way the debate takes place. We have, through the television channel that people may be watching today, the opportunity to make our case.

The government has many fine people working on its advertising and what we in politics call the spinning of the government message, the putting out of the government message. You've got very capable people, led by a person I quoted in the House yesterday, Mr Paul Rhodes, in the Premier's office, a person who's expert in this, a person for whom I happen to have a good deal of personal respect for what he has done over the years in terms of communication. I read into the record some of the concerns he had about the OPP being used as a political police force. That's not anything to do with today, but I read that.

You have many people there in your government and in the ministries to help you put out your message through the media. It can go on the television programs. I watched one yesterday on the CBC between 6 and 7. There was a government representative, a Liberal representative and an NDP representative. They all put forward their points of view, and the public could make a judgement. The same is true on TVO, where that can happen, or on Global TV, on Baton Broadcasting or independent broadcasters, any one of the television broadcasters. You have the opportunity and you're going out there.

The minister responsible for privatization was in my riding yesterday speaking to a totally neutral audience, the Rotary Club in St Catharines, and I'm sure there would have been only a couple of Tories in that group. But there he was yesterday making the case for the government. There's nothing wrong with that. I want to say to the member there's nothing wrong with that. I



hope the Rotary Club, of course, would want to hear from others with a different point of view, but I want to tell you I think that is exactly what the government should do. If you have a message, you put the message out. I have no objection to that. Though I disagree with the contents of the member's speech, and I read the report in the St Catharines Standard, he has every right to do so.

My friend the member for St Catharines-Brock will put out his press releases and will talk to the local news media and he will put forward the government case. I have no objection to that. That's what should happen, that's his responsibility, and I think that's how the democratic process works. This is not how it works: using ministry money — ministries which belong to all the taxpayers — to purvey clearly government propaganda.

I think this has jeopardized the bill you have before the House, the megacity bill. I wonder how the government can now proceed with this bill in the knowledge that this one side has been put out by the government. Some people would say, "Why don't we have" — maybe it's a suggestion — "the government allow the opposition to put something out?" I don't want to get into that. I think it's sufficient for the Progressive Conservative Party to simply pay back the money that was used for this partisan propaganda. That, to me, would be fine.

I know that today —

**The Speaker:** I do want to just say to the member that it's a motion we're speaking to. I know you're trying to stay on the motion. I want you to try a little harder.

**Mr Bradley:** I always like to hear the Speaker on these matters, recalling as I do his many excellent speeches in the past. I know how the Speaker in the past made a genuine effort to stay on topic, and I will do as good a job, I hope, as he did in those days.

The motion is brought forward, and I'm going to say something right here that I think is important for all of us. The opportunity to raise points of privilege and points of order is extremely important not only to the opposition but to the government, for members to rise in the House and talk about matters of concern, because this matter didn't arise this week alone. My friend Noble Villeneuve has not been here as long as I, but he will perhaps recall some of my previous criticisms of governments.

I remember there was an ad called: "Life is good, Ontario. Preserve it. Conserve it." That PC sounded like "Progressive Conservative," and that's what this reminded me of.

I think it's more than coincidental that this is printed in blue. Blue is the official Conservative Party colour, and this is a ministry. If this were printed in black and white I'd say at least they've made one effort not to be partisan, but it's even done in blue, which is a notorious Progressive Conservative colour.

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** It's the colour of your shirt, Jim.

**Mr Bradley:** The member notes the colour of my shirt, which shows how ecumenical I am in this House.

What I am missing this afternoon, if you will allow me this divergence which is not of a political nature, is that

I was supposed to, at 5 o'clock, be able to join Dalton Camp for dinner tonight and hear Dalton Camp speak at Brock University — a member of the Progressive Conservative Party and a person with whom I agree almost entirely, especially that article in the Sunday Toronto Star.

1720

But back to the pamphlet, back to the motion. What the motion has said is this: The motion is a motion of censure not just of the minister, of the government, and there was some discussion of this in a ruling by the Speaker. You'll say: "Well, you know, we want to narrow it," the government says. "Let's narrow it down. Let's just talk about this at any committee and let's narrow it down to simply having this matter looked at."

Well, there was a censure of the government, because let me tell you what happened with this pamphlet. I know what happens with them, and if the backbenchers don't know, if the non-cabinet members don't know, let me tell you what happens. Here's what happens: This goes to the Premier's office. They vet everything, I assure you. They edit this. I would guess that right up to the last minute before it went to the printer, the gurus in the Premier's office were looking at this and saying, "Change this, change that, slant this a little this way, slant that a little that way." So everything that comes out of the government, particularly with this government, which is run from the Premier's office, is vetted and edited and finalized by the Premier's office. That's why the censure is of the government.

They had to ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs to come out and apologize, but don't say he's apologizing for himself. He's apologizing for the entire government, not just his ministry but the entire government, for what this government has done. We want to know what will come of this. I think the Speaker's ruling is significant in that regard, and this motion points to it; because the motion says the Legislative Assembly committee should deal with this kind of advertising. In fact, the government House leader has said maybe we should be looking at what comes out of government.

When you put out an ad that says, "Here are the new rates for the minimum wage," for instance, that's very legitimate. When the government says, "We're going to put out an ad that says kids should get inoculations for measles," I'll support that any time. When the government has ads out that say, "Seniors and people in vulnerable health positions should get a flu shot," that's legitimate. That's legitimate, straight information, and nobody will object to that. When the government puts out tenders, as they have to — that's part of government advertising; you have to put ads out for tenders — that's okay by me as well. That's all routinely part of what a government does. This pamphlet is not what a government does. This is very unfair.

I hope the lesson is learned. This is an extremely embarrassing day for the government. I'm sure you didn't anticipate that you were going to be into this much trouble today, but I'm going to tell you, I could see it building. I saw in the ruling of the Speaker that he referred back to other instances, to other governments, to other circumstances. I can see this building, and it builds



particularly in the context of a tight money situation where governments are pinching pennies everywhere they can. When they're trying to find places to save money, when they're even withdrawing funding from disabled people and so on, people are going to be much more careful in analysing what the government is spending money on. And so they will analyse this, and I take it this is not a prop today, because this is in fact what we're talking about in terms of the motion.

Now, why censure? I think it's important that this Legislature censure the government in this regard, because clearly the government requires this and it has to be on the record. It has to be on the record not only to remind this government, I believe, but to remind subsequent governments. Whether this government is re-elected or there's another government, that should be on the record to see for other governments in the future so they won't embark upon a clearly self-serving, partisan, blatantly political propaganda extravaganza of the kind we have seen.

We have had an interesting debate taking place on the megacity bill. I am worried now that that debate has been skewed. I am worried that the government has somehow put itself in a position where it shouldn't proceed with this legislation until it has rectified this particular situation by having the Conservative Party in Ontario pay for this, return the money to the taxpayers of this province. I think that would be fair.

**Mr Douglas B. Ford (Etobicoke-Humber):** Pay for your phone calls, Jim.

**Mr Bradley:** Then, as I said before to the member for Etobicoke-Humber, who defends the government line — no matter what, he'll defend the government line and barrack from there, and that's fine, you can do that — I suspect there are some embarrassed government members, because I know some of the members of this Legislature, some of whom have been here for a while and some who are new members. I know some of them are embarrassed and I know that next Tuesday morning when there is a caucus meeting, some of them are going to be waving this at the ministers and saying: "Be cautious. Be careful. Be fair. We're prepared to put the arguments out."

Mr Froese and I appeared at Ridley College to talk about economics, the position of the government on economics and the position of the opposition. He put forward his case ably, I hope I put forward my case ably, and the students who were there could make a judgement. That's how it should work. He had some information available to provide, and that's fine, but he didn't go in there with propaganda pamphlets of this kind and distribute them to the people. He didn't do that, and that's the way it works. I have some members who may want to be quoted, and I won't say that too often, but that's the way it should be.

Mr Speaker, in your own area of Etobicoke that happens. You are different because you're an independent member now, but the other members — my good friend the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore, who is an independent-minded person — by the way, he doesn't simply parrot the government line, I'll tell you that. I enjoy his missives in the Toronto Star from time to time. He has a view, and he expressed that view as part of the Trimmer

committee when he disagreed with what was in this because he had his own report, along with Mr Shea, the Reverend Mr Shea, the member for High Park-Swansea, and they came forward with a report. Did it reflect this? No. Did they go to the ministry and say, "Can we please" — and I think I'm on that, Mr Speaker. Did they go to the ministry and say, "Could we please have a pamphlet of this kind printed at taxpayers' expense?" They didn't. They produced their own report that said we shouldn't have one big city in Metro. They produced that report, and that's fine; that's a matter of debate and I don't mind that.

So we have a circumstance in this House today where a government has clearly been found to be in contempt of the Legislature. We have found a circumstance where a government has been caught with its hand in the cookie jar, and that's what our resolution says. Our resolution says, in fact, we censure this government for its activity, and it calls upon the Legislative Assembly committee to find remedies.

I had some recommendations for the Legislative Assembly committee that I've shared with members of this House. One is that the government should immediately withdraw all of its partisan advertising being paid for by the government. What the Conservative Party wants to do is their business. Second, the government should reimburse the taxpayers of this province for that partisan advertising, and in particular this document that I find here before me. The Progressive Conservative Party has plenty of money because it has given everything to the richest people in this province, who will make their contributions, everything they could possibly want. After today's deregulation announcement made in this House, I know your coffers will be full. They'll have to build bigger halls in Ontario to hold those fund-raisers because all the polluters who are going to get off the hook are going to be there shovelling money into the Conservative fund. So you will be able to have the money. It won't be a hardship on the Conservative Party to pay back the people of Ontario for this blatant political advertising.

I hope there are independent-minded members of this government who will vote for this resolution regardless of what the leader of the pack over there says you must do, regardless of what the House leader or the whip or anybody else says to do. I'm appealing to individual members of the Conservative caucus, independent-minded as I know they are, fairminded as I know they want to be, careful with government expenditures as they want the government to be, I'm appealing to those people to join in the censuring of this government for this particular piece of propaganda and to have it go to the committee where further remedies can be found.

1730

We've had an apology and I think that apology was appropriate. It was late, it was written by somebody and then they hold the minister up — I've seen it before in the House — and the minister simply moves his lips as to what somebody in the Premier's office has written. And you think that exonerates you. You think like Pontius Pilate, that somehow you wash your hands of it then. They bring out the bowl, the minister washes his hands and everything is fine.



Well, that is not what is going to happen. I know the government House leader is a powerful person on the other side of the House and is the fairminded person that he was when he was mayor of East York, a municipality which will be disappearing, I know, as a result of this legislation. He will probably recommend to you in the final analysis that you withdraw any objection to this particular resolution.

The Speaker said the following: "Speaker Warner stated 'that this action has come very close to contempt and in the future, the minister should exercise more caution and exhibit greater respect for the proprieties of this House.'"

That was the last warning, just as the Speaker in the House does when he says, "I warn the member." You know that the next time you may be ejected from the House, that you're likely to be ejected from the House, named, as we say. We know that to happen. This was the warning. He went on to say, "Considering the fact that Speaker Warner issued this very stern warning to the very ministry that I am dealing with today, I would consider this ministry to have been given fair warning."

This didn't come out of the blue. This didn't come out of the sky. This in fact was before the ministry. The ministry knew.

The Speaker went on to say: "It is not enough for yet another Speaker to issue yet another warning or caution in circumstances where the wording and circulation of the pamphlet appear on their face to cross the line. I say in all candour that a reader of that document could be left with an incorrect impression about how parliamentary democracy works in Ontario, an impression that undermines respect for our parliamentary institutions." I couldn't agree more with the Speaker in that regard. He says, "For these reasons then, I find that a *prima facie* case of contempt has been established."

Then he went on to say: "At this point in my ruling," a little later on, "I want to express some personal concerns about the propriety of public funds being used to advocate, through advertising, a particular position on a matter that is before the House. Let me be clear: I am not speaking here about politically paid for advertising, but rather about funds that are contributed to by every Ontarian regardless of his or her political view. Personally, I would find it offensive if taxpayer dollars were being used to convey a political or partisan message."

Then he goes on to say, "But I feel that it is wrong for a government to attempt to influence public opinion through advertising that is paid for with public funds — which, I might add, are not available to the opposition — instead of through debate in the House." That's the point.

As I say, I know your caucus staff produce for you some material that you give out to people, and I understand that. That's the way it works and the same can be done for the other parties. I think where you cross the line, and the Speaker is correct in this, is when you have the ministries spending money for those purposes, because that's where you have more money than the opposition.

The amount of money allocated to parties to carry on their operations in this precinct is based on the number of

seats we have. There's a base of 30 seats, I believe, for the Board of Internal Economy, but if you have more seats you get more money, and that's something you accept. It's just like free-time broadcasting by the CBC or TVO. It's based, I think, on the number of representatives you happen to have and during a campaign that happens, the free advertising.

I understand that and I accept that. I may not like it because you have far more members, but I accept that. But when you take ministry money contributed by every taxpayer, including people who are vehemently opposed to the government, and use that for the purposes of advertising, you've crossed the line and you are in contempt of the Legislature and you are deserving as a government of censure for this.

This is not censure of individual members in this House. I don't censure the member for Wellington, whom I've respected for many years. I can't speak for him. I suspect he's uneasy when he sees this happen, as he was probably angered when other governments might have engaged in it. I don't take any of the members individually and say that they are to be condemned, but I think the government as a whole, the leaders of the government, the people who advise the Premier in the Premier's office, the people who put out these kinds of messages, the people who are responsible for these kinds of pamphlets deserve to be censured.

I believe that we should, as I've asked for, have restitution, that is, the Progressive Conservative Party should pay for this ad and any other partisan ads. You should withdraw all ads that are serving a partisan purpose for your government and you should apologize to the people of this province. Voting for this resolution would accomplish part of that.

**Mr Wildman:** I rise to speak in favour of this motion and I do so as an individual member of the Legislative Assembly who has served in this place for over 21 years and who has never seen what we've seen transpire today in the Legislative Assembly ever before.

I don't participate in this debate lightly. I don't rise in this debate for, to be very blunt, partisan reasons. I rise in this debate because the motion that is before us follows from a very grave Speaker's ruling, a ruling that in many ways is unprecedented in the annals of this assembly. I want to talk a little bit about that and what we face, all of us, as members of this assembly this afternoon. I hope at least those members of the House who are not members of the treasury bench, who are not members of the government, members of the opposition and members of the party that supports the government but who are not part of the government, will listen to this very carefully and consider what I have to say in support of this motion.

The Speaker, I think, took time to consider very carefully points of privilege that have been brought before the House by myself and the member for Oakwood and the member for St Catharines. Those were points of privilege that were brought before the House on behalf not only of ourselves as individual members of the assembly but of all members of the House, because in my view I thought the Speaker should carefully consider whether or not the privileges of all of us as members of



the assembly had been transgressed by the government. This is a very serious ruling and I understand why the Speaker took time to make certain that he did the research and considered carefully before making a final ruling.

The central part of this motion is very important. It says that the government should be censured by the House. I want to make one thing clear: This motion of censure follows from a finding by the Speaker. The Speaker found the government, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, to be in contempt of the Legislative Assembly. That is very serious. I don't know of any other time when that has happened in the history of this place.

It's not that we're trying here to determine whether or not there was a contempt. The Speaker has ruled that there indeed was a contempt. The government was in contempt of the legislative process. That is very serious.

1740

I want to say a little bit about the response of the government members who have spoken: the House leader of the government and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Both the government House leader and the minister have tried to say that they need to get some information, some ruling, some understanding of what a government can communicate. That's not what this is about. That's not what this is about at all. Frankly I think that's almost obfuscation by the ministers involved. This is not about trying to determine what governments can communicate to the public; it's simply about saying clearly that governments cannot assume that matters that are before the House will pass. You can't just assume that because there's a majority government, matters that have not even been debated, that have not gone to committee, will pass as they are introduced at first reading.

I've seen many times in this House where governments themselves have introduced amendments to their own legislation, and in some cases, not very often, where governments do not proceed with legislation, or in fewer cases, where governments even withdraw legislation they have put before the House. Just today, for that matter, the government House leader put a motion before the House and then withdrew it. He didn't assume, I guess, that just because he put it before the House it would pass.

That's what this is about. It is about ignoring the fact that we have a Legislature and that members of the Legislature have a job to do, that we are elected to represent the concerns of our constituents and all the people of Ontario in debates about legislation and policy, and that where we think there should be changes, to put amendments whether we're members of the government or members of the opposition.

It is our responsibility to listen to what the people have to say and respond to their concerns and their proposals. No government can assume that just because it has introduced a piece of legislation at first reading, it is going to pass as is. That's the mistake, that is the error the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing made. It's not about whether or not he can communicate with the public or what kinds of communications he can have with the public.

It is quite clear that in this pamphlet all the minister had to do, all his ministry had to do in composing this

pamphlet, was to say, "If the legislation passes the House, these things will happen," or I suppose, "If the legislation passes without amendment, these things will happen." But the government, I guess in an act of arrogance, just assumed that because it has a majority there are not going to be any amendments, that there are not going to be any changes and that this is just going to be passed as is, so they could put out a pamphlet saying so.

This is not about giving information to people. This is about assuming you can ram anything through just because you have a majority. This is indeed, unfortunately, a contempt of the legislative process, and it's not me saying this, it is the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, whose job it is to protect the rights of all members of the House, the Speaker who, I remind you, is elected by all of us at large in this assembly. It's not an easy job, and I know the Speaker doesn't take it lightly.

We don't really need to have a long-drawn-out process to find out what governments can communicate with the public. The government just has to understand they have to agree that things could change between first reading and third reading, that some things that are introduced at first reading might not become law, because the legislative process will work. It is the height of arrogance for any government — New Democrat, Liberal or Conservative — to assume that just because they have an elected majority, anything they say goes and it doesn't matter what the opposition thinks or what other members of the public think, and to then put out a pamphlet saying, "This is the way it's going to be, that's it," before it's even debated in the House.

I want to deal with a couple of other assertions that have been made by the government ministers, but before I do that I want to say to you clearly that I believe that once the Speaker made his ruling, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing should have gotten up immediately and apologized.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Wildman:** I'm told he tried. But I want to say this clearly to you: An apology is not enough. First we have to know for what he is apologizing, and if he's saying, as he did when he made his statement to the House, that he's apologizing because he was confused about what he could communicate with the public, that is just not the case. What he is apologizing for is the arrogance of believing that anything this government introduces is going to pass without change. That should be what clearly he's apologizing for. So we also need a statement of the wrong that was committed, the contempt that was committed, not just for this government but for all future governments to know.

You will know that when I raised the matter initially, I referred to a ruling by Speaker Warner in this House, a ruling which dealt with an action by a minister of our government, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener):** So we're being hung for that.

**Mr Wildman:** No, you are not. The member says, "We are being hung for that." I know he does not mean that with disrespect to the Speaker, who made this ruling, because the Speaker made it very clear that in the



previous case Speaker Warner had warned this very ministry. He said that this should never happen again. He didn't say, "This should never happen again during the life of this government." He said, "This should never happen again," and it wasn't just Speaker Warner. Speaker Warner was basing his ruling on a ruling by Speaker Fraser in the House of Commons, who said exactly the same thing about an advertising campaign that the Mulroney government had. He said that it should never happen again. The people who are responsible for writing this pamphlet in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing should have been aware of the ruling of previous Speaker Warner because it dealt specifically with them.

The Speaker has said very clearly that where the ministry had been warned before, it would not be enough in this case to simply warn them again, and that for that reason, in his view, it constituted a contempt.

Let's all be clear. There is not a debate here about whether or not this is a contempt. It is. It has been so ruled by the Speaker, so that's not in debate and it is not appealable. That's it. It is a contempt. In my view, the minister should have gotten up immediately and apologized, and he should have apologized clearly, not for saying he was confused or that the ministry was confused about what they could communicate to the public, but because he put out a pamphlet which assumed that as soon as something is introduced in this House, the majority government will carry it through without change by third reading.

That's what he should have apologized for, an unequivocal apology; not trying to fudge it, not trying to hedge it, just: "I did the wrong thing. My ministry did the wrong thing. As minister I am responsible and for that I apologize. This is what I did wrong," a statement of the wrongdoing. Then frankly I think the committee that will and should consider this shouldn't get involved in discussions about what kinds of communications should go out or not; it should deal with this specific pamphlet, as the House leader said, and make a recommendation about some remedy beyond the apology and the statement of wrongdoing.

Perhaps the committee might decide that the party of which the minister is in government should reimburse the consolidated revenue fund for the cost of the production and distribution of this pamphlet, because the pamphlet was designed to move forward the agenda of that political party in a partisan way and to influence the people of Metropolitan Toronto to support the position taken by the party.

1750

I agree with my friend from St Catharines that I believe also that the government should withdraw the television ads that are being paid for by the taxpayers, but I respect the ruling of the Speaker that he did not find that to be a *prima facie* case of contempt. However, I still believe that's inappropriate, not a contempt of the House, as the Speaker has said it isn't, but inappropriate for the taxpayers to be paying for that.

I think it's quite acceptable for the Conservative Party to be paying for their other ad campaign if they wish to. Fine. If they want to have this campaign, let the Conser-

vative Party pay for it too. Don't have the taxpayers pay for it.

I think this is a very serious day for all of us as members of the House. I think it's a sad day for the minister involved, it's a sad day for the government and it's embarrassing, but more than that, I think it's embarrassing and a sad day for all of us as members of the assembly, every one of us, and I say that very seriously.

I have a tremendous amount of respect for this place and for the people who serve here. The people from all political parties, many of whom I've served with who are not here now, on all sides of the House. I've always held my colleagues to be people who may have disagreements, but who are here to do the best job they can for their constituents and for the people of Ontario. I believe that. I have had serious disagreements with other members on policy and on questions of the political agenda, but I have never disrespected their commitment to serve the people of this province.

That's why it is important, when we have such a serious and grave ruling made by the Speaker, that the government admit it made a mistake, that it not try to fudge it, just say: "We did wrong. This is what we did wrong and this is what we're prepared to do to remedy it."

It's been suggested that this is a matter of confidence. This is just bunk. The fact is that in all matters of confidence it's simply a decision, as the Speaker ruled in this House, it's a matter of opinion, it is a decision that is made by the parties and by the members of the House. If the government deems a matter not to be a matter of confidence, it is not a matter of confidence. It's as simple as that. So for this government House leader to somehow argue that the government members and the members of the party who are not members of the government bench, but who support the government, must vote against this because it's a matter of confidence, all that says is that he has decided it's a matter of confidence, not that it is. This is not a matter of confidence. We are not asking the government to resign. We have never suggested that the government should resign on this matter.

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** Len Wood did.

**Mr Wildman:** He said the minister should. I'm not sure I agree with him.

**Mr Baird:** He said, "You should all resign."

**Mr Wildman:** Well, I'm sorry, I don't share that opinion. There are days when I do share that opinion, but in this very serious matter I do not. I do not believe that the government House leader, for instance, should be resigning because of the errors made by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

I know this is controversial and that the whip is trying to bring the members of the other side into line, but I want to say that I hope they don't bring you into line on the basis of trying to tell you that this is a matter of non-confidence. It is not a matter of confidence. Every one of you, every one of us, every member of the assembly must determine whether this is confidence in the government, and I say to you, I do not believe it is a matter of confidence, or even close to it.

The government should support this motion. The government, in supporting this motion, would support the



ruling of the Speaker. The government should support this motion because the government made a serious error and has been found in contempt.

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock. I understand that I'm up earlier than normal today, and I don't want to take any time away from the member speaking and that's why I've stopped the clock, but I want to give just a brief description of what will happen tomorrow, because I'm certain there will be some concerns with respect to private members' public business.

**Mr Wildman:** Mr Speaker, I'd be quite happy to wrap up tomorrow.

**The Speaker:** That's good. I appreciate that.

I will simply outline what the process is tomorrow, because it is an unusual circumstance we find ourselves in, and then I will adjourn the House for the day.

Tomorrow, by motion of the government, private members' bills will start at 11, as opposed to 10. Our standing orders are very clear: The only reason this place should meet before 1:30 of the clock is to deal with private members' business. Tomorrow happens to be that day. Therefore, although not asked to make a ruling, I will tell the members present that the procedure we'll use tomorrow is that at 11 o'clock the House will open and private members' bills will be dealt with until 12. Then at 1:30 of the clock, when we come back to this place, we will immediately go into the debate as it sits today, with the member for Algoma properly having the floor at 1:30.

It now being nearly 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 11 of the clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1758.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO  
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Lt Col The Hon / L'hon Henry N.R. Jackman CM, KStJ, BA, LLB, LLD  
Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell  
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers  
Senior Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Journals / Greffier adjoint principal et Greffier des journaux: Alex D. McFedries  
Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees / Greffière adjointe et Greffière des comités: Deborah Deller

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma	Wildman, Bud (ND)	Hastings-Peterborough	Danford, Harry (PC)
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	High Park-Swansea	Shea, Derwyn (PC)
Beaches-Woodbine	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Huron	Johns, Helen (PC)
Brampton North / -Nord	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Kenora	Miclash, Frank (L)
Brampton South / -Sud	Clement, Tony (PC)	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
Brant-Haldimand	Preston, Peter L. (PC)	Kitchener	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Brantford	Johnson, Ron (PC)	Kitchener-Wilmot	Leadston, Gary L. (PC)
Bruce	Fisher, Barbara (PC)	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	Pouliot, Gilles (ND)
Burlington South / -Sud	<b>Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron</b> (PC) Minister without Portfolio (seniors issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (affaires des personnes âgées)	Lambton	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Lanark-Renfrew	Jordan, W. Leo (PC)
Carleton	<b>Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W.</b> (PC) Minister of Environment and Energy / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie	Lawrence	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
Carleton East / -Est	Morin, Gilles E. (L)	Leeds-Grenville	<b>Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.</b> (PC) Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels
Chatham-Kent	Carroll, Jack (PC)	Lincoln	Sheehan, Frank (PC)
Cochrane North / -Nord	Wood, Len (ND)	London Centre / -Centre	Boyd, Marion (ND)
Cochrane South / -Sud	Bisson, Gilles (ND)	London North / -Nord	<b>Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne</b> (PC) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Comwall	Cleary, John C. (L)	London South / -Sud	Wood, Bob (PC)
Don Mills	<b>Johnson, Hon / L'hon David</b> (PC) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, government House leader / président du Conseil de gestion, ministre de la Santé, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	Markham	<b>Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H.</b> (PC) Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Dovercourt	Silipo, Tony (ND)	Middlesex	Smith, Bruce (PC)
Downsview	Castrilli, Annamaria (L)	Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Carl (PC)
Dufferin-Peel	Tilson, David (PC)	Mississauga North / -Nord	<b>Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John</b> (PC) Minister of Education and Training / ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Durham Centre / -Centre	Flaherty, Jim (PC)	Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Margaret (PC)
Durham East / -Est	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Mississauga West / -Ouest	<b>Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob</b> (PC) Minister without Portfolio (privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation)
Durham West / -Ouest	<b>Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet</b> (PC) Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	Grimmett, Bill (PC)
Durham-York	Munro, Julia (PC)	Nepean	Baird, John R. (PC)
Eglinton	<b>Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William</b> (PC) Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme	Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)
Elgin	North, Peter (Ind)	Niagara South / -Sud	Hudak, Tim (PC)
Essex-Kent	Hoy, Pat (L)	Nickel Belt	Laughren, Floyd (ND)
Essex South / -Sud	Crozier, Bruce (L)	Nipissing	<b>Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D.</b> (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Etobicoke-Humber	Ford, Douglas B. (PC)	Norfolk	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)	Northumberland	Galt, Doug (PC)
Etobicoke-Rexdale	Hastings, John (PC)	Oakville South / -Sud	Carr, Gary (PC)
Etobicoke West / -Ouest	<b>Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris</b> (PC) Speaker / Président	Oakwood	Colle, Mike (L)
Fort William	McLeod, Lyn (L)	Oriole	Caplan, Elinor (L)
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Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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First Session, 36th Parliament

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Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
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(Hansard)**

**Journal  
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(Hansard)**

**Thursday 23 January 1997**

**Jeudi 23 janvier 1997**



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 23 January 1997

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 23 janvier 1997

*The House met at 1102.  
Prayers.*

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### ST LAWRENCE PROVINCIAL PARKS PARCS PROVINCIAUX DU SAINT-LAURENT

Mr Cleary moved private member's notice of motion number 35:

That, in the opinion of this House, the reopening of several parks formerly operated by the St Lawrence Parks Commission in eastern Ontario, an agency of the government of Ontario, would translate into enhanced tourism, new job opportunities, including employment for students, spinoff benefits for area businesses and an overall boost to the local economy and since several potential operators have submitted proposals to the government to lease or purchase these parks; this House calls on the government of Ontario to finalize tendering and announce as soon as possible a private sector operator for the closed parks and campgrounds of the St Lawrence Parks Commission in order that the parks may be open for the spring/summer of 1997.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Pursuant to standing order 96(c)(i), the honourable member has 10 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** I am delighted to have this opportunity to put forward this resolution in the House today and I believe it holds much potential in terms of tourism and job opportunities in our part of Ontario.

I would like to ask that as I put forward this proposal, along with the reasons behind it, each member support this resolution. I would hope the members of the House would put aside partisan differences and consider only the benefits that can be achieved in eastern Ontario with this motion.

I'll begin with a few comments on the background, although there is not likely a member in this House who is not familiar with the basics of the closed provincial parks, given the number of times that I and to some extent — not recently — the member for S-D-G & East Grenville have raised the matter over many years.

The history goes back to 1950, when the government was seeking both hydro-electric power and a transportation network to the Atlantic Ocean. As part of the process, Premier Frost toured the upper St Lawrence Valley, an area spanning my riding and the riding of S-D-G, and promised that the government would create some potential park space in the area.

Schools, churches and many businesses were to be lost in our area. The chamber of commerce had many meetings, and as a student I attended the meetings.

The Premier returned to the chamber with this promise, and legislation to create the Ontario-St Lawrence Development Commission Act was finalized in 1955. It specified that this new commission would "develop, control, manage, operate and maintain the parks," lands vested to it throughout the counties of Glengarry, Stormont, Dundas, Grenville and Leeds.

I can recall park area and tourism space that was lost. When we used to go to that park when we were kids, we saw a sign way up in a tree, at the top of a pine tree, that said this would be the high-water mark of the St Lawrence once the flooding had taken place.

The statute clarified that the commission did not own the land, nor does it today. Ownership is held by the government of Ontario.

After the commission put much work into the development of the shorelines, planting trees, clearing farm land, creating historical and commemorative sites and constructing the Long Sault Parkway for more than six miles over 12 artificially created islands, the parks were opened to the public in 1961.

Shortly thereafter, when the responsibility to oversee the park commission was transferred from the planning and development ministry to the travel and publicity ministry, the commission received the name of the St Lawrence Parks Commission, which it holds today.

From the official opening in 1961 to the 1990s, visitors to the area and residents enjoyed the facilities of the commission, which we were mighty proud of.

Early in the 1980s the former Conservative government closed Lake View Heights park, but in 1990 the government of the day saw fit to close five of the 15 parks and campsites, saying attendance was down and it was not profitable for the government to run these parks. The parks included Farran park, Charlottenburgh park, Grenville park, Morrison/Nairne park and Brown's Bay campground. This left seven full-time, 20 seasonal and 23 summer students without jobs.

I admit that the decision to close the parks was made by a former Liberal government, by Tourism Minister Ken Black under a Liberal administration, but I also ask the House to recognize that as quickly as the government announced that it would no longer run the parks, negotiations were under way to allow private investors to step in. In fact, in a very short period of time a deal was hammered out with Osnabruck township to revive Farran park and the Nairne campsite, two deals that I was very familiar with.

But then there was the election in the fall of 1990 and the NDP government took over, so no further announce-



ments could come out of the Liberal administration. The ball was now in a new government's court.

For the first year or so of the NDP administration, it looked promising that, for example, Charlottenburgh park would be allowed to re-open with private investment. The tourism minister of the day, Peter North, the member for Elgin, who is still a member of this House, spent a lot of time trying to get a deal with Charlottenburgh park in our area. I and the municipal representatives in the area thank him for that. It looked promising for a while, but after a new tourism minister stepped in, no further advances were made — quite the opposite.

1110

In 1993, without having secured lease takeovers for the park closures, the NDP administration closed two more parks, Adolphustown and Raisin River, and that pretty much brings things to where we are today. Some parks that were closed by the government in the early 1980s, in 1990 and 1993 remain closed to this day. Unless concrete action is taken by the government, unless this resolution passes, yet another season may go by with the parks closed.

Already Raisin River has lost three years of tourism, three years of park revenue, three years of summer jobs for the students and three years of spinoff in the economy. Charlottenburgh park has lost six years of tourists, six years of park revenue, six years of summer jobs and the same spinoff in the community.

Unless the government acts here today, the blame for these parks will be on three governments, all political parties. I cannot stress enough that there is much potential in these parks. There's no reason why these parks should remain closed. All the ingredients needed are right before us. We just need to get our house in order and get an agreement in place.

First, in fact all successive governments have to share in the problems that we have on these closed parks.

Second, we have a lineup of potential investors, each offering different terms to the government. Some proposals offer private sector money in return for a percentage of revenues to the province. We have another proposal, a partnership for a training site for business startup and management counselling. All told, I am personally aware of half a dozen proposals that are sitting on the government's table, and I'm sure the minister of the day has more.

Leasing the parks out would not have to cost the government a dime, and I'm sure the government would reap many benefits in the way of jobs and employment. There simply isn't a hindering block anywhere. The government must go ahead. Even the suggestion that successor rights would be a problem has been cleared, and this has the support of local representatives in our area.

Perhaps most importantly, reopening the parks means jobs, jobs, jobs, which we really need in our part of Ontario. Statistics Canada shows that the rate for the Cornwall area was 20.2% this past summer and 13.9% in November and that student employment was much less.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** Thank you for your patience, Mr Speaker. I am pleased to rise and speak

on this resolution. There are some parts of the resolution that I of course agree with totally, because I've always been a very strong believer in the importance of our provincial parks. As someone who has spent many summers camping all across North America, in the United States and all across Canada, in every province in Canada, I am a huge fan of our parks system.

I know that all three political parties have wrestled with the dilemma of keeping parks open with the degree of subsidy they receive from the taxpayers, and our government, the New Democrats, was no different as we struggled with that to find dollar savings wherever we could. That was true of the Tories and true of the Liberals as well. It really has been a very difficult thing to do, to maintain our park system at a quality that people have come to expect from our provincial parks. As a matter of fact, it was the last Tory government that expanded our provincial park system very substantially, when the Honourable Alan Pope, the member for Cochrane South, was the Minister of Natural Resources.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** Former member for Cochrane South.

**Mr Laughren:** He was the member for Cochrane South. When I say, "He was the member," that means former, I think.

I think there's an acknowledgement on this side that the Tories built our park system, and did a good job of it, in the old days. Alan Pope was one of the ones who helped expand the park system, but since then there's been a lot of pressure on the fiscal side to cut back on support. That's a very tough call to make, because I believe they are a huge asset for us as a province. The tourism which the member for Cornwall refers to is important.

Having visited many parks in the United States as well as other provinces, I think we have a park system to be proud of, but I am getting increasingly nervous about our ability to maintain that level of quality in our park system. I think that would be very sad, if we allow our park system to degenerate.

Speaking directly to this resolution from the member for Cornwall, it's very true, what he says about enhancing tourism and so forth. I regret that we've come to the point where we're privatizing aspects of the provincial park system. We need to understand that all three political parties have done this when they've been in government, so I'm not casting stones in this regard. But in this particular resolution what the member is calling for is for parks that are closed to be reopened, if I understand his resolution properly, and that proper requests for proposals go out so that those parks can be open this summer. I think that makes a lot of sense.

I wish we had the resources to continue to operate our parks totally in the public sector, because I think that's where we'll get the best level of quality. I've stayed in some private parks as well, and I can tell you that when I travel, and I camp a lot, I always look for a public park over a private park, because I've been jammed in, in private parks, where I thought it was disgraceful. But when there are no other spaces, that's what you have to do. I really believe that if you were to take a measure of



the parks, the campgrounds in particular, in North America, you wouldn't have much of a comparison between the public parks and the private parks, because the public parks are invariably nicer, better maintained, have more room and are no more expensive than the private sector parks. But the private sector parks are not subsidized. I understand the dilemma. If you operate a private park, you at least want to break even. I know that many people wouldn't be satisfied with that.

It really is a situation in which we are forced to subsidize our public parks. I think it's an asset. I think it's something we should continue to do, because as long as those parks are there, they're already there, the land mass is already set aside, it would be foolhardy to get rid of those parks.

I appreciate the fact that the privatization that has occurred has been privatization of the services offered in those parks, as opposed to the privatization of the parkland itself. That would really be disturbing, if the government — which is on a privatization bent; I understand that — but it would be truly tragic if it privatized the land mass represented by the 150-some provincial parks we have in this province. Privatizing the services I don't like either, even though, as I said, all three governments, all three political parties, have done some of that. I don't like it. I didn't like it when we did it and I don't like it when somebody else does it, but I do understand some of the pressures that come into play.

I would simply say that I understand the way the resolution is worded and I think on balance I would support the resolution. I'm bothered by the request for proposal for privatization, but I think those parks are better open than closed and at the end of the day it would be my intention to support the member for Cornwall in his resolution.

1120

**Mr Bill Grimmer (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** It's a pleasure today to speak on the resolution brought forward by the member for Cornwall.

I know this is an issue very close to the heart of a number of members representing eastern Ontario. As the parliamentary assistant with special responsibility for tourism, I've had the opportunity to discuss this and other issues with representatives of the St Lawrence Parks Commission, members of the Eastern Ontario Tourism Association and government members for Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings, Leeds-Grenville, Frontenac-Addington and the member for S-D-G & East Grenville, who is also the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. These members, as well as the member for Cornwall, have been working very hard to try and reopen the parks in order to boost local tourist and economic activity.

It's clear to me that the parks and campgrounds of the St Lawrence Parks Commission have the potential to play an important role in the promotion of tourism in eastern Ontario. Reopened parks should play a role in attracting visitors to what is a unique recreational and historic attraction in the St Lawrence corridor.

The St Lawrence Parks Commission provides recreational and tourism opportunities through a number of

historic attractions and recreational areas. Some of the commission's more popular attractions include Fort Henry and Upper Canada Village. The commission also features a series of parks and campgrounds, two parkways, a long-distance recreational trail, a wildlife sanctuary and a marina.

The St Lawrence Parks Commission is a schedule 1 agency that retains revenues and is funded on a net basis for planned expenditures. In 1995-96, it exceeded attendance revenue targets. It has completed a comprehensive five-year corporate plan, and the commission has moved from activity-based to entertainment-and-recreation-based destinations, with plans for private sector investment. These changes will help to ensure the St Lawrence Parks Commission's long-term viability and provide greater spinoff benefits to local communities, businesses and residents.

As the commission moves towards greater self-sufficiency, its future gets brighter and brighter. There's no doubt this attraction serves as a generator of tourism and economic activity for the residents living in eastern Ontario, and the minister is well aware of the commission's contribution. As the member for Cornwall knows, the minister has dedicated himself to working with the St Lawrence Parks Commission to encourage an environment where municipalities and/or private sector interests will stand up and take notice of the opportunities which exist through the leasing of these closed parks.

The member for Cornwall has provided a good background on the history of this matter. It goes back to 1990, when the St Lawrence Parks Commission closed eight parks in the St Lawrence corridor. I believe the best indication of these parks' great potential is demonstrated by the fact that four of those formerly closed facilities have since been reopened. For example, Osnabruck township took on Farran park, which is now operated by it; Grenville park is currently leased by an individual in the private sector; Adolphustown park is licensed to the not-for-profit Bay of Quinte branch of the United Empire Loyalists' Association; and the commission has opened another park near the bird sanctuary as a nature campsite.

I know the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism has advised the member for Cornwall that the St Lawrence Parks Commission is currently working with a local township, Charlottenburgh township to develop a lease for Raisin River park for this year, if possible. At the same time, the commission is also looking at the future of Charlottenburgh park in conjunction with Charlottenburgh township.

In fact, I'm pleased to remind the member that the ministry will be conducting a program review of the commission, including a request for proposals which will include closed parks for alternative service delivery. The minister is optimistic this tender process can be issued in the near future and that operators for the parks can be found in the near future.

I note in the member's resolution that he calls for the government to finalize tendering and announce as soon as possible a private sector operator for the closed parks and campgrounds of the St Lawrence Park Commission in order that the parks may be reopened for the spring or



summer of 1997. While I intend to support this resolution, I indicate to the member that the results of the RFP process may not be implemented for this summer season. I am, however, pleased to report that the staff at the commission have informed the minister that they are optimistic that the local township will agree to operate both parks this year.

Clearly this government has taken more positive steps than its predecessors in making the St Lawrence parks attractive to the private sector and to ultimately having the facilities reopened. Specifically, we have removed some of the restraints which have previously tied the hands of the St Lawrence Parks Commission in its effort to attract private sector interest. Unlike previous requests for bids, the crown is now exempt from applying successor rights.

The St Lawrence Parks Commission has developed a corporate plan which is in keeping with the government's direction. I'm optimistic that through partnerships with the private sector the commission will be able to reopen the currently closed parks in question.

I thank the member for Cornwall for bringing this subject forward today, and I'm pleased to say I'll be supporting the resolution.

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott et Russell) :** Tout d'abord, je veux féliciter mon collègue de Cornwall. Par ce fait-même, j'appuie la résolution de mon collègue.

Je veux aussi vous dire que l'industrie touristique est très importante dans ce pays. Nous savons que l'industrie touristique embauche au-delà de 280 000 personnes par année. Le secteur récréatif embauche plus de 63 000 personnes.

Lorsque nous parlons du secteur récréatif, nous parlons du sport en plein air et nous parlons du camping. Dans le secteur de Cornwall, nous savons que quelques parcs ont été fermés par les trois partis dans le passé, mais aujourd'hui nous reconnaissons l'importance de l'embauche ou de l'emploi chez les étudiants.

Nous reconnaissons que dans le secteur de Cornwall, le pourcentage de sans-emploi est très élevé. Même si nous regardons le pourcentage du mois de septembre dernier, qui varie dans la région de 20 %, nous pouvons dire que lorsque nous rapportons ces chiffres, ça manque les chiffres des personnes qui ont fait appel ou qui ont déposé des demandes d'emploi. Mais quand nous regardons dans le secteur d'étudiants, ces chiffres ne reflètent pas le pourcentage que nous indiquons.

Je dis encore que l'industrie touristique est très, très importante non seulement dans l'Ontario mais dans le pays et dans le monde entier. Le secteur touristique en Ontario rapporte des revenus d'au-delà de 17 \$ milliards par année. Dans le secteur touristique, nous rapportons des revenus d'au-delà de 16 \$ milliards. Donc, les revenus au total dans ce pays se chiffrent au-delà de 29 \$ milliards, mais au moins 16 \$ milliards est dans le secteur touristique de l'Ontario.

Je regarde le nombre d'emplois, comme j'ai dit tout à l'heure, les revenus pour le secteur récréatif ; seulement récréatif, le revenu encore là est d'au-delà de 2 \$ milliards. Donc, tout ça veut dire que le secteur de Cornwall pourrait définitivement bénéficier de cette industrie touristique.

J'ai dit encore que le secteur touristique est la quatrième industrie majeure au Canada. Je regarde dans le rapport qui était préparé par le comité aviseur qui avait été mis sur pied par le ministre du temps en 1993, l'honorable Anne Swarbrick. Elle avait demandé de mettre sur pied un comité aviseur qui a fait la tournée de la province pour voir ce qu'ils devraient faire dans le secteur touristique en Ontario pour améliorer le tourisme, améliorer l'emploi. Dans son rapport, on mentionne que le pourcentage de touristes qui rentrent en Ontario est de l'ordre de 18 % du montant total, un montant total d'au-delà de 16 \$ millions de revenus. Je n'ai pas les chiffres exacts dans le moment ; je reviendrai avec les chiffres plus tard.

Donc, si nous regardons la retombée économique et la retombée touristique en Ontario de 16 \$ milliards, de cela, quelque 18 % nous provient du Québec, et reconnaissons que les parcs du Saint-Laurent longent vraiment le fleuve Saint-Laurent, qui est immédiatement suivant les lignes du Québec. Je regarde seulement qu'au parc des Voyageurs maintenant, qui est justement à l'entrée de l'Ontario du Québec, nous avons des retombées économiques qui sont très, très importantes parce que le tourisme qui rentre du Québec à l'Ontario par le parc Voyageur est d'au-delà de 100 000 personnes par année.

Donc, si nous regardons les parcs le long du Saint-Laurent, je regarde au-delà de 500 000 touristes qui proviennent du Québec. J'ai toujours dit qu'il est très, très important pour le gouvernement de l'Ontario de faire sa publicité en français au Québec, parce que beaucoup de gens, beaucoup de résidents du Québec, croient que les résidents de l'Ontario ne parlent pas le français. J'ai toujours dit que pour le secteur francophone en Ontario, même si nous ne sommes que 500 000 mille francophones, je crois qu'il est très important que le ministère du Tourisme fasse sa publicité en français.

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Il y a beaucoup de statistiques de sorties de cette étude. Je regarde dans ce rapport, qui était mis sur pied, encore une fois, par le comité aviseur, dont je faisais partie, et nous avons fait la tournée de l'Ontario. Le tourisme en Ontario a été laissé de côté trop longtemps. Non seulement au pays mais dans le monde entier, nous regardons des retombées économiques très élevées. Je vais le répéter en anglais : It also represents 10.7% of the global capital investment and 10.9% of worldwide consumer spending. Lorsqu'on regarde dans ce domaine, nous voyons que nous anticipons une augmentation de tourisme un peu partout.

Je regarde la page 9 du rapport :

"By the year 2000 the tourism industry in Ontario will achieve leading levels of growth, specifically by:

"Attracting 15 million more visitors, an increase in the number of visitors to Ontario from 159 million to 174 million;

"Generating approximately \$6 billion more in visitor spending to a new revenue level of \$23 billion (1991 dollars);

"Achieving clear recognition as one of the top industries in the Ontario economy."

Je crois que tous les membres de cette assemblée devraient supporter la résolution de mon collègue de



Cornwall. Je me rappelle que pendant 35 ans je faisais souvent le trajet de ma municipalité de Rockland pour visiter les parcs de Cornwall. Nous pouvions voir à ce temps-là les touristes qui venaient d'autres provinces et d'autres secteurs de l'Ontario. Même si ce tourisme compte une partie de 36 % du tourisme total de l'Ontario, ce sont des visiteurs qui proviennent d'autres municipalités ou d'autres secteurs de l'Ontario, mais je crois qu'il est très important.

Lorsque je regarde encore un peu plus loin, des touristes qui proviennent des États-Unis et de l'Alberta, 11 % viennent de l'Alberta. Nous en avons de l'île-du-Prince-Édouard, de la Nouvelle-Écosse — tous les résultats dans ces rapports du comité aviseur sont très clairs.

Il me fait grand plaisir de prendre un vote sur cette résolution. J'espère que tous mes collègues pourront supporter la résolution du député de Cornwall, puisque nous reconnaissons que le chiffre pour les sans-emploi est encore très élevé dans le secteur de Cornwall même si on dit qu'il y a eu une amélioration de ce chiffre à Cornwall du mois de novembre de 13,9 % vis-à-vis le 20,2 % cité pour l'été, au mois de juillet. Ces chiffres induisent le public en erreur, parce que ce ne sont que des chiffres pour les personnes qui ont demandé des emplois. Les personnes qui ne sont pas actuellement récipiendaires d'assurance-chômage ne figurent pas dans ces chiffres.

Si on regarde chez les étudiants, la plupart du temps, je dirais 99,9 % du temps, ce sont des personnes qui n'étaient pas récipiendaires d'assurance-chômage. Donc, de plus en plus on cherche à créer des emplois pour nos étudiants, et je crois que le secteur des parcs en Ontario pourra bénéficier à nos étudiants en repensant la réouverture des parcs le long du fleuve Saint-Laurent. Je vous remercie pour l'occasion d'adresser la parole sur cette résolution.

**Mr Bisson:** Generally, as the representative of the New Democratic caucus, I support the resolutions the member for Cornwall brings forward. I understand that we all come to this Legislature and advocate on behalf of our communities and our ridings, but I would have hoped he would have tried to make his motion a little more far-sweeping in its reach than what this calls for.

Specifically, it calls for the opening of several parks formerly operated by the St Lawrence Parks Commission. Although I understand what the member is trying to do and I generally don't have any difficulty with what he's asking for, I would have asked that the member try to expand that. The motion should have read along the lines of the government re-engaging itself towards the good management of our public parks system that we've long had in Ontario.

The member for Nickel Belt, who is the dean of the Legislature — maybe we should listen from time to time to people who have been here for a while — speaks about how governments over the years have played a very important role, first of all, in creating public parks and then making sure those parks have sufficient funding to be able to operate and offer the services to citizens within our communities, and rightfully so. He pointed out that previous governments, those of Mr Davis and Mr Robarts and others under various provincial Conservative premiers, have invested quite heavily and had a very

substantial impact on expanding the public parks system in Ontario. I think if you asked many people in the province the question about their level of confidence about how those parks are run and how they felt about them, the general reaction was one that was very good.

Unfortunately what has happened over the years, as the former Treasurer pointed out, is that since then, under David Peterson, under Bob Rae and now under Mike Harris, governments are finding themselves in a financial situation of scrambling to pay for essential services like health care, education, social services, transit and others and trying to balance off the needs of funding those services adequately. Where do you get the dollars if you're not able to go the tax route and raise taxes? Governments have been forced to take a look at how you remove money from programs like parks to offset the operating deficits we have in those other programs.

That's what I would like to limit my comments to this morning. Although in general I support what the member is trying to put forward here, I ask the member where we are going to find the money to do it. I think it's important that even the opposition, if we're asking for something, should try to come forward and at least give a general outline of how we think we're going to pay for it. I think it's fairly easy — pour un membre de l'Assemblée de venir ici et dire, «Je veux que le gouvernement paie tel et tel service pour mes citoyens,» je pense qu'il est assez important, comme membre de l'opposition ou du gouvernement, que l'on dit au gouvernement que, pour payer ce service, on propose que tel et tel service soit diminué par tel et tel montant pour être capable de trouver les dollars nécessaires pour payer le service, ou que l'on propose un frais d'utilisateur de ce service ou d'augmenter les taxes. Je pense qu'il est nécessaire, en tant que l'opposition, de revenir du moins avec une proposition de manières de payer ce service.

En général je n'ai pas de problème avec la motion. On va supporter la motion de M. Cleary, le député de Cornwall. On sait que ça fait très longtemps que le député, dans ce parlement et dans le parlement d'avant, sous le gouvernement de M. Rae, soulève cette question, et à beaucoup de reprises, faisant affaire avec le parc Saint-Laurent, comme il l'avait mentionné dans son discours. Nous, en tant que gouvernement, ont été forcés, pour les raisons que j'ai déjà mentionnées, de réduire le budget de ce parc qui a valu la réduction de certains services, et le gouvernement de M. Harris a fait plus dans cette direction.

It's not often that we get the opportunity in this Legislature to talk about parks, because we do not often get legislation from the Ministry of Natural Resources, the ministry responsible for parks, or we deal generally with this kind of legislation. I just want to say the following in the four minutes that I have left. The government is moving in a direction in which they want to privatize services within the parks we now own in Ontario, so many provincial parks in which we've been used to seeing summer rangers working and seeing Ministry of Natural Resources employees running those parks over a number of years are going to see those services privatized.



I listened intently to the members opposite, from the Conservative side, talk about how it was a good thing they were doing that, and that one of the things they were going to do to help the operators of these new, privately operated parks do this would be to allow no successor rights to employees who are going to be working for these private contractors. The government member took great pride in being able to say that in the Legislature today, and I would just say this: We need to determine, as a Legislature, number one, the importance of provincial parks in our community and in this province. I think we should dedicate some funds to making sure the province maintains a role of operating those provincial parks as we have in the past. It might be less of a role than we had before, but we should try to keep at least a minimal service.

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The last thing is that in order to operate parks, we're going to basically do it on the backs of working men and women who work for the Ministry of Natural Resources. "Rather than paying that worker \$12 or \$14 an hour, as is set out in the collective agreement," says the Conservative government, "we're going to allow an individual operator to circumvent a collective agreement so they can pay workers minimum wage."

I think it's a pretty simpleminded and mean-spirited policy undertaken by this government, because what they are saying is, number one: "We place no value on the labour of working men and women in this province. We see working men and women as units of production and basically something that can be exploited by a private sector employer." I don't think that's right. I think working men and women in this province are what makes this province work. We are the people who pay the taxes, we are the people who produce the goods within our industry, and we are the people who manage our public resources and public services in this province.

If we don't put a value on that, if we're not prepared as a society to say that working men and women should get a living wage and should be able to get enough money so they can look to the future with some confidence, I think that says something very bad about our society. It says that we want to move back to a society of the late 1800s where people like the Vanderbilts of the United States and various sorts of what they used to call railroad barons used to be able to control basically all the wealth in the country at the cost of working men and women. I certainly don't want to return to that kind of society. I think men and women have worked too hard over the last 80 to 100 years to advance the rights of working men and women in this province to see a government such as Mike Harris's move all of that back.

So I just want to say to the government, I think you're wrong in what you're doing. You should not be trying to privatize these parks in the first place, and in doing so, you shouldn't be doing it at the expense of working men and women.

Comme j'ai dit plus tôt, le caucus va voter en faveur, j'imagine par majorité, sur la motion de M. Cleary. J'aurais demandé que le député, par moyen de sa résolution, aurait pu faire une expansion de la résolution pour dire que le gouvernement regarde, point final, le rôle

qu'il a besoin de jouer dans la livraison de services de ses parcs dans la province. Je comprends que le député de Cornwall parle pour sa paroisse, comme on dit en français. Il est ici à Queen's Park pour parler de la part du monde à Cornwall, mais je demanderais la prochaine fois que le membre regarde la situation peut-être d'une manière plus agrandie pour être capable de récupérer les services non seulement pour le monde de Cornwall et ceux qui vont à Cornwall en vacances, mais pour toute la province.

**Mr Bill Vankoughnet (Frontenac-Addington):** I'm pleased to have this opportunity to speak briefly about the resolution before us today, ballot item number 58, put forward by the member for Cornwall, to reopen parks formerly operated by the St Lawrence Parks Commission in eastern Ontario with the use of private sector operators.

I support the premise of this resolution, as it would enhance not only the much-needed economic activity but also promote our rich Loyalist history, historic sites as well as our parks.

I treasure and speak of the great historical aspects of these properties. We are interested in promoting stakeholders as recognized by the St Lawrence Parks Commission in 1955, when this legislation was passed by the former Premier, Leslie Frost, and the local member, Mr George Challies.

This resolution endorsing the government's plan for such a tendering process to select alternative operators and to open closed parks supports innovative management by interested stakeholders. To expand and create jobs, more for less can be achieved at all levels.

We need to find new ways to do business. It is important that we form partnerships between governments, labour, business, individuals and organizations.

Adolphustown Park, west of Kingston on the historical Loyalist Parkway, is proof that contracting out is workable. Adolphustown Park wasn't functioning properly and was losing money, but now it is being leased from the St Lawrence Parks Commission by the United Empire Loyalists' Association and run by capable individuals. There is efficiency and praise from happy campers and certainly tourists alike. The United Empire Loyalists' Association, Bay of Quinte branch, the St Lawrence Parks Commission, historic Adolphustown township and all the individuals involved who have made Adolphustown Park the success it is today are to be congratulated.

It should be noted that Adolphustown Park had a profit last year of \$12,000, half of which goes to the St Lawrence Parks Commission and the rest reinvested in the park itself. I would like to compliment Minister Saunderson on implementing a review of the governance of Fort Henry through a joint committee called the Fort Henry working group, comprised of members of the community, the Kingston Area Economic Development Commission, the Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce, the Fort Henry Guard Club of Canada, the Department of National Defence and the St Lawrence Parks Commission. The Kingston community has been very supportive of this effort.

An example of what can be done is a full-size outdoor skating rink recently opened on the fort's parade square.



Fort Henry, which is owned by the federal government, is a national treasure, but the question arises as to why the federal government does not operate this historic site. In order to promote tourism and trade in eastern Ontario, the federal government should also be involved in the promotion of trade and tourism through a fixed link to the United States via Wolfe Island. American tourists and commerce would be drawn to the region's beauty, history and trade through this convenient bridge access.

The St Lawrence Parks Commission or a separate commission, such as a Loyalist Parkway commission, should do more to promote our parks, historic sites and culture, particularly west of Kingston to the Trenton area in the Bay of Quinte region.

There are three houses of historical significance along the Loyalist Parkway that are owned by the province of Ontario. They are the Allison house in Adolphustown, which houses the rich cultural heritage of the first permanent United Empire Loyalist settlers and for some time has housed the Loyalist Cultural Centre; the Fairfield-Gutzeit house in Bath, which was constructed in 1796; and the Fairfield-White house in Amherstview, which was built in 1793, making them among the oldest examples of Loyalist architecture in Canada.

Due to funding cutbacks in recent years, the commission has not been able to develop or promote properties at the level that will maintain structural integrity for the enjoyment of future generations. There is also a role for the provincial government that it must continue to play in promoting and preserving our cultural and heritage properties along with our scenic parks.

West of Kingston, the history and beauty are bound together by scenic Highway 33, the Loyalist Parkway, which was opened by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth in 1984. We owe it to ourselves, our ancestors and future generations of Canadians to promote and effectively maintain all the region's history and natural beauty.

I urge members of this Legislature and our government to continue to find ways and means necessary to promote our parks in the Loyalist townships, known as the Johnstown settlement and the Cataraqui settlement, to preserve our historic past and promote our promising future in eastern Ontario.

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**Mr Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa East):** I want to congratulate my colleague the member for Cornwall, Mr Cleary, for introducing this resolution. I know that Mr Cleary has been working on this resolution for a number of years. He has been an advocate of the St Lawrence Parks Commission of eastern Ontario for as long as he's been a member in this House. I hope that the members today will support this resolution for a number of reasons. The main reason is that tourism is the second-largest industry in the province of Ontario. Reopening these parks will create jobs and attract new people to Ontario, and at the same time we will be able to profit from their dollars. This is what the government is all about. We have to promote the historical values of these parks and, at the same time, create jobs.

I realize that some of my colleagues, especially the member for Cochrane South, is a little concerned about the possibility of privatizing the operation of these parks.

I'm not too concerned about the privatization. I want to see people work. I want to see students in the province of Ontario spending their summer months visiting these parks. I think it's much better to privatize the operation of these parks rather than to see them closed. I think we have a responsibility to look after students, especially.

We have an opportunity to create a partnership with the private sector, and he's imploring the government of Ontario to finalize tendering and announce as soon as possible a private sector operator. From what my colleague says, we do have some private investors. The private sector is willing to sign an agreement with the government of Ontario to operate these parks. We're all looking to improve the quality of life in the province of Ontario and we're opening casinos hoping we will attract new tourists in the province. At the same time, I think casinos are very important, but also our parks are very important.

You've noticed, Mr Speaker, that in the last couple of years the government has introduced user fees for these parks. Maybe this is the new trend. I'm not saying that user fees are totally acceptable in Ontario, but at the same time I think it's better to use user fees than to close these parks.

Je veux premièrement féliciter mon collègue de Cornwall pour sa résolution. Je crois que M. Cleary, depuis un certain nombre d'années, défend la cause de nos parcs en Ontario. Il est notre critique, il fait son devoir, et aujourd'hui je crois que sa résolution est remplie de bons sens, pour la simple raison qu'il y a une possibilité qu'un nouveau partenariat sera créé entre le gouvernement et le secteur privé.

Je ne suis pas tout à fait d'accord avec des frais d'utilisateurs pour ces parcs, mais par contre, je préfère avoir ces parcs ouverts au lieu de fermés. Je le répète : le tourisme, c'est la deuxième plus grande industrie en Ontario et le gouvernement se doit de promouvoir l'Ontario, de promouvoir nos parcs et les valeurs historiques de nos parcs. Je crois que la résolution de mon collègue aujourd'hui démontre très clairement la volonté des gens qui demeurent dans ces secteurs, surtout le secteur de Cornwall et les environs, que ces gens-là sont prêts à aider le gouvernement, si vous voulez, à promouvoir l'Ontario, à promouvoir nos parcs, et à « vendre » les valeurs historiques de nos parcs.

Alors, je vais appuyer la résolution de mon collègue de Cornwall.

**Mr Gary Fox (Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings):** I'm pleased to speak on this resolution today for two reasons.

First, recreational parks have an impact on the lives of many of my constituents in Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings. Prince Edward county is essentially an island, with the Sandbanks Provincial Park and many other private parks providing employment to people and tourism in related industries.

Secondly, the topic of this resolution is very important to our government's agenda. The role of the government in the tourist industry is being revisited in renewed options for alternative ways to manage our provincial parks. The fact that in 1990 the St Lawrence Parks Commission under the Liberal government closed eight



parks because of budget constraints and as part of its business rationalization plan is proof that the government needs to seriously look at how its parks are managed.

The private sector, municipal and even non-profit involvement in the operations of some of our parks is and should be an integral part of our tourist industry. The St Lawrence Parks Commission manages six historical attractions, including Upper Canada Village and Old Fort Henry, as well as the Chrysler Marina, 12 parks and campgrounds, the wildlife sanctuary and the Upper Canada Golf Course, one of eastern Ontario's finest championship courses. I don't need to detail the contribution these historical and recreational sites have made, both to the local tourist economy in eastern Ontario and as places of historical significance. For anyone who has been fortunate enough to visit any of these sites, I'm sure you will agree that they are simply an enjoyable experience.

There are also economic and other reasons for the operation of the commission's facilities. For instance, the United Empire Loyalists, who have a history throughout the greater Kingston area and particularly in my riding of Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings, and the Ontario Museum Association are interested in the preservation of the artifacts, records and the heritage of Chrysler Park, Fort Henry and Upper Canada Village.

The St Lawrence Parks Commission corporate plan that was submitted to the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism in July 1996 seeks to reduce government dependency on provincial transfers while maintaining these values. This plan is in tandem with that of our government — that of fiscal responsibility. This plan has allowed the commission to cope effectively with a transfer payment reduction by the province of \$2 million.

Similarly, in my riding Sandbanks Provincial Park has been operating more effectively and cost-efficiently since it was restructured last summer. At Sandbanks, the province supplies operating funds and the superintendent manages the three parks that comprise the Sandbanks park — Outlet Beach, North Beach and Sandbanks — on an individual basis. Any proceeds made from the park, including the film crews that currently use the park, are reinvested in the park. This continued reinvestment in the park should eliminate the need for provincial operating funds.

It is interesting to note that of the four parks that have reopened within the St Lawrence Parks Commission in the past seven years, one has been taken over by a municipal government through a lease arrangement, one through a private individual, one through the St Lawrence Parks Commission and the fourth one, in my riding, the Adolphustown Park, has been leased to the Bay of Quinte branch of the United Empire Loyalists' Association, a non-profit group.

Today's resolution largely deals with concerns about two unopened parks: Charlottenburgh and Raisin River. I agree they should be reopened.

The crown is now exempt from applying successor rights, which increases the commission's flexibility to lease parks. Charlottenburgh township is discussing with the commission regarding taking over operations this

year, and will work in tandem with the St Lawrence Parks Commission to ensure the future of Charlottenburgh park. The commission is working with Charlottenburgh township to operate Raisin River park in 1997 and to look at the future of Charlottenburgh park.

It's important to note that the member is not asking for provincial funding. I agree with the member for Cornwall that reopening the park is important for tourism for eastern Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Your time has expired. The member for Cornwall, you have three minutes.

**Mr Cleary:** I appreciate the remarks of the members for Nickel Belt and Muskoka-Georgian Bay — and just to remind him, I'm aware of the negotiations that are going on right now and I would appreciate it if he would give that a boost because I'm not sure we're going to be in place for the 1997 season; also the members for Prescott-Russell, Cochrane, Frontenac-Addington, Ottawa East and Prince Edward-Lennox.

I just want to remind the people of this Legislature and the residents of Ontario that in our part of Ontario there are 4,000 who are unable to find jobs out of a population of job seekers of 24,000.

I just remind the members that this resolution has the support of all my municipal colleagues, the wardens, the reeves. To the government members here today, I'd like to let you know that I have received congratulations from the mayor of Cornwall for bringing this resolution forward. As many know, the mayor has announced he is seeking the nomination for the Conservative Party in the next federal election. I thought it might show you how non-partisan this might be.

My goal in getting these parks open is mainly to get our students jobs for the coming summer, which they have not been very successful at, and to get them job experience, to create tourism and to create opportunity at no cost to government.

As I said earlier, we are very proud of the park situation in Cornwall. I've had some calls from as far away as Florida asking for information on the closed parks of the St Lawrence. These individuals were willing to put up their hard-earned money to probably get a piece of the tourism end. I also have letters from a tourist group in Germany that was very interested in getting involved in possibly bringing tourists to our part of Ontario.

I thank my colleagues for their remarks. You know there is very little investment. If we can get tourist dollars, we will all benefit, and we're able to bring our own produce and everything else forward. I thank all the members for their support.

**The Deputy Speaker:** We are dealing with ballot item number 58 standing in the name of Mr Cleary. If any members are opposed to a vote on this ballot item, will they please rise.

Mr Cleary has moved private member's resolution number 35. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, I do now leave the chair. The House will resume at 1:30 this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1202 to 1331.*



## GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion by Mr Colle arising from the Speaker's ruling of January 22, 1997.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Further debate?

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Yesterday evening when we adjourned the debate, we were engaged in a very unusual process and just the beginning of the debate — excuse me, I think I had 10 minutes.

**The Speaker:** I think you did too, actually. There you go: 10:05.

**Mr Wildman:** Thank you, Speaker. I was saying, as we adjourned the debate last evening we were in a very unusual and I suppose historic situation in this House. The beginning of this session today is an indication of how unusual the process is in which we are engaged. We are not going through question period or the normal procedures, because we have a matter before the House that takes precedence over all else. We have before us, as a result of a very important Speaker's ruling, a motion of censure that is directed at the government resulting from the actions of a ministry, a part of that government, which the Speaker has judged to be a contempt. I want to make a couple of points in closing.

First, it has been suggested, I think by the spin doctors in the Premier's office, that somehow this motion is a matter of confidence. I believe that is to stretch the truth significantly, to come to that kind of a conclusion. I'm tempted to conclude that if the government takes that position it is simply because it is trying to find an excuse to whip the individual members of its caucus into voting against this motion. I hope that's not the case, and I mean that sincerely.

This is not a matter of confidence; it is not. It is an expression of opinion by all members of this House, as individuals, about the actions of a member of the treasury bench, actions which the Speaker found to be in contempt of this Legislature, to be in contempt of the legislative process. That is very serious.

I also want to deal with the fact that some ministers, again I think at the behest of the spin doctors in the Premier's office, tried to call into question whether or not there was indeed a contempt and whether there was just some confusion or inadvertence. I want all members of the House to be clear: The decision on that has been made; that is not what the debate is about. The Speaker ruled that the government, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, was in contempt of the Legislature. That is not appealable, it is not in question, and it is a very serious ruling. There's no question about that.

What is in question is what kind of remediation there is to be done. How is this to be rectified? That is what is in question and all members of the House have the responsibility to determine how this should be done. In determining how to vote on this motion, members must determine whether the Speaker's ruling that there has been a contempt committed, a contempt against this Legislature, a contempt of the privileges of all members of this Legislature, must be made right in some way or whether we should just leave it.

I'm very concerned about this, because I think it is part of a pattern, a pattern of attitude in this government. We saw that pattern demonstrated a little over a year ago when the government brought forward the so-called omnibus bill and tried to ram a lot of very controversial changes through this House without giving the proper approach to legislative debate and the opportunity for the public to have a say and to influence the process as is part of our democratic process.

At that time we said that Bill 26 was a demonstration of bullying by this government, a government that did not take seriously the legislative process, a government that in a way saw the Legislature and the legislative process as a nuisance, a government that seems to think — I hope the minister understands how grave this situation is — that once the cabinet decides that a piece of legislation should be introduced in the Legislature, it then becomes law. That is what Speaker Fraser referred to as executive democracy, so-called.

As the Speaker of our Legislative Assembly said yesterday, this is not an executive democracy. The fact that the cabinet has decided that something should be proceeded with and introduced in the Legislature for first reading does not mean it becomes law, because if it does mean that, it means that the role of every individual member of the Legislature is insignificant and doesn't matter, that what we do in this House is irrelevant.

That's an insult, I believe, to all members of the House, but I want to say to the members of the government party, to those of you who are not members of the treasury bench, it is an insult to each and every one of you, because what it is saying to members of the Conservative Party in this House is that the cabinet believes that as soon as they decide something is going to become law, every one of you is just going to line up and vote for it without having any say other than what you may discuss in caucus beforehand.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** They're saying the back bench is irrelevant.

**Mr Wildman:** I don't think backbenchers are irrelevant. I don't think backbenchers should be treated in that fashion, whether they are on the opposition side or the government side. In my view, every member of this House is elected by his or her constituents to represent their concerns in debate, to put forward their views and to represent all of the people of Ontario in a very serious and thoughtful way in this House. That is why we are elected. That is what the legislative process is about.

The Speaker has ruled that in putting out this piece of advertising, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has shown contempt for this Legislature and for that process. It shows a lack of respect for that process, a process that I've been involved in as an individual member of this House for over 21 years, a process for which I have tremendous respect.

Members of this House cannot be taken for granted. The legislative process cannot be taken for granted. The votes of members of this House cannot be taken for granted. The acquiescence of the public to government proposals cannot be taken for granted. That is not how our democracy works. A government cannot just assume that because it has a majority in the Legislative Assembly



what the cabinet decides is a *fait accompli*, without further debate, hearings, public input, amendment, change, debate and discussion.

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There are systems around the world that do work that way, and all of us as Canadians and Ontarians are thankful that we are lucky enough to live in a British parliamentary democracy where things do not work that way. Too often, this Premier seems to think that as long as he and a small group of the executive decide something, it's automatic, that's the way it is. It's the arrogance of power, and that arrogance was demonstrated and was ruled a contempt by the Speaker.

There must be a remedy. In this situation, not only has the government in my view shown contempt for the legislative process and for the members of this House and for the Legislative Assembly, but the government has shown contempt in this particular case for the people of Metropolitan Toronto and for their views and concerns. We can't just leave it there. That's why we have this motion before the House. We must seek a remedy. We mustn't just have the kind of equivocal attempt at apology from the minister that we had yesterday. There must be a remedy. I call on the members of this House to understand the Speaker's ruling and to vote for this motion.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege, and if I could have a page, I would like to send you this package of materials.

**The Speaker:** The fact is that we can't have privilege until we decide on this point. There can be no privilege.

**Ms Lankin:** No privilege and no order until —

**The Speaker:** No, a point of order is always in order, but privilege can't be decided until this particular ruling has been dealt with and dispensed. A point of order is always in order, but privilege can't be.

**Ms Lankin:** But I seek your —

**The Speaker:** The member for Beaches-Woodbine. I ask for the indulgence —

**Ms Lankin:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I think this is probably a matter of privilege, in which case I will wait; I understand your ruling. It is a question of whether or not the government remains in contempt of the House. I have materials. A contempt issue is an issue of privilege, not an issue of order. Could I just ask for your assistance on that, and if it is privilege I will wait until this matter is completed.

**The Speaker:** I would suggest that it is a privilege issue and I think that we should dispense with this before I take any more privilege points.

Further debate.

**Mr David Turnbull (York Mills):** I rise today on an extremely important case, a case which will undoubtedly be reviewed by legislatures all across Canada and throughout the English-speaking world. Your ruling of yesterday will be one which will be referred to, and so indeed you have assured yourself your page in the history books. It's a very important ruling, and not for one minute do I challenge it — from the very beginning I want to say this — but I want to put certain things on record.

You ruled that a case of *prima facie* contempt had been established, but I emphasize that this was not a finding of guilt. Minister Leach apologized yesterday, both in this assembly and outside in a press conference, as is appropriate in a circumstance like this. The opposition clearly wants to make more of this issue because it's good inside politics. I was speaking to one of the members of the press yesterday, and it was interesting, he seemed to also agree that this was inside politics, and clearly we're in uncharted waters here.

The opposition's handling of this issue, I would suggest, is somewhat disgraceful in light of the offer of the government to send this matter to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly, and Leach's statement also agreed with this matter. It is very clear that we need some guidelines as to how taxpayers' money is spent.

**Mr Wildman:** Just say, "If this passes in the Legislature, this will happen."

**Mr Turnbull:** The member for Algoma has shouted across the floor. He just had the floor but he's saying something again, "Just say, 'If this passes the Legislative Assembly,'" and indeed you bring me to my next point. This is a very narrow ruling about the fact that the brochure in question did not have wording to the extent, "If this passes the Legislative Assembly." To the member for Algoma, you are in fact correct; that's exactly what the narrow aspect of this ruling was, and we will indeed have to address this. We need guidelines. We need guidelines for this government and every other government in the future, guidelines on how all communications from both the government and the opposition are conducted.

I have an example of an open letter, which was published in several newspapers around the province I believe on June 19, 1993. It was an open letter from Premier Rae. In this open letter, which was paid for by the taxpayers, as in the case that we're discussing, there is a line which said, "For this reason we've brought in a law." In fact, the legislation with regard to the social contract had only just been introduced. It had not been passed, and yet in this open letter, paid for by taxpayers, in the newspapers, it clearly says, "We've brought in a law." It further says, "I want to point out that the law protects public workers." Then it says, "The social contract law will give employers," further on it says, "The law sets guidelines," and further on it says, "This is spelled out in the law," and "with the social contract law" and "the law reflects that concern."

We are talking about exactly the same kind of situation, and there is no doubt about it. This, as has been very clearly ruled by the Speaker, is not the way public funds should be spent. Now, we've got to learn from this.

I look back at the recent elections of new leaders of both the NDP and the Liberal Party. I have here the newsletter from one of the members of this House, Annamarie Castrilli, which is of a very partisan nature, paid for by the taxpayers as a newsletter. Not only was it distributed in her riding but it was also distributed in all of the public meetings —

**The Speaker:** Chief government whip, if you —

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** What ministry paid for that?



**The Speaker:** The member for St Catharines. Chief government whip. Would you stop the clock, please. Thank you.

I just want to be very clear —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I would like the opposition members to come to order. I would like to be very clear that what we are debating today is the motion that's before the House.

To the chief government whip, the motion is dealing with the ruling from yesterday, the referral to committee. I appreciate the points you're trying to make. I don't want to enter into debate on that issue. That is a separate issue, the householder issue. The referral of where that goes is directly to the Board of Internal Economy. It's separate and distinct. Let's try and stay, within reason, on topic. Thank you.

1350

**Mr Turnbull:** A very good point, Mr Speaker. I was merely trying to illustrate the problems that we face here in this Legislature with taxpayers' money, and indeed I do believe, and I have always believed since I sat in opposition, that we need to be very careful as to how we spend taxpayers' money.

With respect to your ruling yesterday, as I've said, it is very clear from your ruling, because I've read it carefully, that it is a very narrow technical ruling that had that publication contained some wording to the extent that that was subject to it being passed by the Legislature, it would have been in order and would have been consistent with other government documents. That is merely the point I'm trying to make. But it is quite apparent that we need to have a coming together of all parties in a discussion of this matter as to how taxpayers' money is spent.

The member for Algoma, in his debate, said that votes of this House cannot be taken for granted. Sir, you are quite correct, and I will fight to my last breath to ensure that is always the case. We have an apology from the minister, and I'm sure he feels very sorry that this has occurred, but because some staff member has prepared some wording which is a few words off what you would like and in fact is virtually identical, in terms of the content, the error, to Premier Rae's letter, therefore we need to make sure that all parties are aware of this very serious problem. But it is a technical problem.

We have been communicating with the people of Metro Toronto, and as a member for Metro Toronto I can assure all of the members who are from other parts of the province that my office has had a lot of requests saying they want some factual information. Certainly this letter, which has various tables of expenditures, is exactly that. It is factual information. It isn't something which is open to debate; it is a fact that that is the distribution of the costs within Metro.

I see the member for Beaches-Woodbine nodding her head. I would of course point out that in March of this year she was criticized for the fact that during her leadership race she put out as a householder highly partisan material, which in fact had the NDP logo on it, paid for at taxpayers' expense.

**The Speaker:** I'm allowing a lot of latitude to the chief government whip, and the breadth of latitude I think

I'm offering is fair and equitable. It really is difficult for me to understand how this relates back to the committee referral and the motion before us. If you could help me by simply tying this back in, it would make it a lot easier to manage this place.

**Mr Turnbull:** The point I'm making is that we need a full airing of the whole way in which taxpayers' dollars are spent on communications both from the government and from the opposition. That's the whole point I am endeavouring to make, and that was why the amendment was made yesterday which the opposition objected to.

I still believe it would be in the best interests of the taxpayer — and let's remember, folks, that's why we're here. This is what we're doing. We are representing the taxpayer, and we all have a responsibility. The old adage is, "Let the person without sin cast the first stone." I would admonish you all to think about that, because we have on record oodles of times when there has been a suggestion that the other parties have been in violation of this.

Your ruling yesterday, Mr Speaker, on the same kind of issue was that we had a ministry that had been ruled against once before, when the NDP was the government, and had been warned that if it happened again the Speaker would find contempt. I would point out that that was another government, and there is no doubt about it, it does not excuse it, but it does somewhat explain how the mistake occurred. I would say that our government will be extremely careful in future to make sure the wording was very carefully scrutinized so that we do not make that mistake.

But I would add that the amount of money that our government is spending on government communication is significantly — many, many millions of dollars — less than both the Liberal Party when it was in office and the NDP when it was in office.

The whole reason I am bringing this to your attention is that our party takes very seriously the situation and will seek to remedy it. However, the wording —

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** That doesn't sound very sincere. Not what you said before.

**Mr Turnbull:** I hear babbling from the latest member of this Legislature that it doesn't sound very convincing. Well, sir, I've heard you speaking, and I've heard you speaking out of both sides of your mouth, so please don't start saying that —

**The Speaker:** Order. Members opposite, I appreciate that it's going to be a rather cantankerous session and I understand the difficulties we're going to be faced with today. I would ask that the member speak through the Chair. If heckling can be taken to the lowest —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** I remember when you had the very same tone, Gary.

**The Speaker:** Member for Lake Nipigon, I'm speaking about heckling.

**Mr Pouliot:** I'm sorry.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, and I'll hold you to that. If we just take it down a few degrees, it would be helpful. To the chief government whip, I know it is a little difficult, but if you can just speak through the Chair it would be better.



**Mr Turnbull:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Clearly, it is the responsibility of the government to communicate with the citizens of this province. We will continue to do so and we will endeavour to make sure that an error of this nature never, ever occurs again, and clearly future governments of all political persuasions must be guided by your ruling of yesterday, which I say was most appropriate. It has implications all across Canada and, as I said, all around the English-speaking world where they look to the parliamentary traditions and privileges of all the legislatures.

However, the wording of the motion which was brought by the member for Oakwood yesterday is such that I cannot support the motion, much as I agree with the intent that we must not have a violation of the taxpayers' concerns in the future. With that, I will sit down.

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr Speaker, I listened with interest to the chief government apologist and I can understand how it's in the government's interest to circumscribe and narrowly limit your ruling. But we don't see it that way. I think it's important not to underestimate the significance of that ruling or what took place in this House yesterday.

For the first time in the history of this Legislature, a representative of the government was found to be in contempt. I want to say that one more time to emphasize it: For the first time in the history of this Legislature, a representative of the government of the day was found to be in contempt. Let's be very clear what this means. This isn't just contempt for the 130 people who have the privilege of serving in this chamber. It's contempt for the entire population of the province of Ontario.

Before I proceed any further, and in case this is misconstrued, I want to make it perfectly clear that what I'm talking about today has nothing whatsoever to do with the right of the government to put forward its agenda, to introduce legislation that would help support that agenda. It's got nothing to do with that. But for every right this government has there is a corresponding obligation, and the obligation of which we speak today is the obligation to allow an opportunity for us as members of the opposition to offer our opinion, to criticize, to offer alternatives, and the same for the greater public. I want to make it perfectly clear that I'm not talking about the right of the government to move forward on its agenda, but I am talking about the corresponding obligation for us to have an opportunity, and for the people of this province to have an opportunity, to address those initiatives in a very real and meaningful way.

1400

I had hoped that we wouldn't be returning to this issue today. We have very many important issues, such as the dumping of \$1 billion on to residential taxpayers, a cost that will make property taxes soar over the next few years. I am particularly concerned about the implications of the mega-week initiatives on our ability as a province to care for our less fortunate.

I had hoped that the Premier, upon hearing of your objection, Mr Speaker, to the use of taxpayers' dollars for the television ads, ads clearly designed to change public opinion, would have pulled those ads immediately. We should have had that announcement this morning. The

Premier should have had a press conference immediately, either yesterday afternoon or first thing this morning, and said, "We understand the full significance of this hearing, and for that reason we are not comfortable in any way whatsoever with these television ads, so we are yanking them." We've heard nothing in that regard.

I had also hoped that the Progressive Conservative Party would have done the right thing by now and offered to reimburse taxpayers to the tune of some \$300,000, which was the cost spent on this self-serving, partisan pamphlet. There has been no word on that front either. None of that has happened, and that's why we're still debating this issue today.

This may very well be the most blatant example of contempt that this government has for the people of Ontario, but unfortunately and sadly, it's certainly not the first example, nor is it in fact the second example or even the 10th example. We are less than one week away from the first anniversary of the passing of Bill 26, a bill that some people refer to as the ominous bill or, more popularly, the bully bill.

We all remember how Mike Harris and the Conservative government tried to shove that bill through this House, and we remember as well how they tried to sneak the bill into this Legislature while many of the opposition members were locked up in a budget lockup, together with members of the media. We remember how they wanted to ram Bill 26 through without public hearings. All Ontarians remember how my caucus and the NDP caucus, all of us following the courageous lead of my Liberal colleague Alvin Curling, literally had to shut this place down and stay here all night just to force this government to give us a few weeks of hearings. That's all we were looking for.

It's important to understand who the key architects of that bill were: the Premier, the former Minister of Health, who has now resigned —

**The Speaker:** Leader of the official opposition, if I can just have some order, I, again, gave some latitude to the chief government whip; he's got to somehow relate this argument back to the motion before us. I say the same to you. I can give some latitude, but we must remember that we're debating a motion. The motion is under debate, and you've got to come and visit that motion.

**Mr McGuinty:** I understand very well, Mr Speaker, and I accept that, but I think it's important as well to understand that there is a context within which this latest incident is found. I think it's important to establish the pattern here.

There are many, many more incidents of contempt shown by this minister and this government for the public and for our democratic process. We remember how this very minister had his office force lawyers to back away from legal action on behalf of the parents at the Franklin school, and we remember how the Minister of Education threatened a Scarborough school principal after she dared send a letter to parents.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** I appreciate the heckling. It's a government censure motion. It's a broad topic. I'm doing my best to contain the debate. When this motion is before us,



if you read it carefully, it's pretty broad. There is a referral to a committee, but it's very difficult for the Speaker to direct debate.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I did as best I could with the chief government whip, to the member for Nepean, but again I gave him a lot of latitude as well. So I ask each side of the House to understand when they're debating that it's a broad context; it's difficult to pigeonhole debate when the first part of the debate is, "The government should be censured."

Leader of the official opposition.

**Mr McGuinty:** You know they still haven't learned. They're still trying to restrict what we can and can't say on this side of the House.

We remember the Minister of Education and Training, as another example, threatening a Scarborough school principal after she'd dared to send a letter to parents speaking out against the government's education cuts, and we remember more recently the Minister of Health, now resigned, using confidential OHIP billing data to smear a government opponent. Of course we all know the contempt the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs are showing to the legitimate concerns of the people of Metropolitan Toronto and the growing opposition to the megacity.

There is a pattern here; there is a clear pattern that has emerged over the year. This is a government that sees democratic process as an inconvenience, as a nuisance to be skirted around or just plowed over. It ought to see democracy as the fundamental underpinning of what we do here, but it doesn't.

This government, from the Premier on down, has nothing but contempt for the opposition or for any other legitimate dissent. They don't care about what the people think. They don't care about what their backbenchers think. They remind me of the university professor who once said, "Universities would be great places if they could just get rid of the students."

This government believes that health care would be great if they could just get rid of the doctors, that education would be great if they could just get rid of the teachers and that governing in Ontario would be great if they could get rid of the opposition and all those who happen to oppose the government agenda.

Yesterday, Mr Speaker, and I applaud you for this, you had the courage to stand up for our rights as legislators and for the people of Ontario. You made some very clear points about government using the people's money to run ads to persuade the people to change their minds. You said, and I want to quote as this is worth repeating:

"I want to express some personal concerns about the propriety of public funds being used to advocate, through advertising, a particular position on a matter that is before the House.... Personally, I would find it offensive if taxpayer dollars were being used to convey a political or partisan message. There is nothing wrong with members debating an issue and influencing public opinion; in fact, it's part of our parliamentary tradition to do so. But I feel that it is wrong for a government to attempt to influence public opinion through advertising that is paid for with public funds...."

Mr Speaker, I couldn't agree more. What the government has done here is wrong and it is indeed, to use your very word, "offensive." Mike Harris's multimillion-dollar propaganda campaign is nothing short of a deliberate attempt to improve the political fortunes of the Conservative Party with taxpayers paying fully 100% of the costs, and that's wrong.

It's not the first time the government has wasted tax dollars on self-serving propaganda. On April 11 this past year there was a radio and newspaper ad campaign to promote Tory spending cuts one day after cutting \$500,000 from anti-drinking-and-driving ads, and that campaign cost taxpayers \$350,000. On November 23 this past year there was a newspaper ad campaign by the Ministry of Education to promote new, standardized testing and report cards. The cost of that campaign, \$135,000.

Of course there are the two television ads currently running, both featuring the Premier, what can only be described as self-serving and partisan ads. The costs to taxpayers of those two ads are over \$1.3 million. Just think of what we could do with \$1.3 million today in this province. We are told there was supposed to be another television ad campaign. This one was going to be put out by the Minister of Health, but luckily for taxpayers the government dropped those commercials at the very last minute because they realized there was simply no way in this province to defend spending \$650,000 on self-serving health care propaganda at the same time as you've shut down hospitals.

A very important question here is, what role did the Premier's office play in all of this? Let's remember what's happened here. You have, for the first time in Ontario's history, once again, found a minister of the crown to be in contempt of this House. The minister said he's sorry, but neither he nor the Premier nor anyone else has answered a host of lingering questions.

1410

We're told that this very pamphlet that was found to be in contempt of this Legislature was partially written and heavily edited in the Premier's office itself. How, clearly, could they have done this when they must have known that such a campaign was inappropriate?

We know what the Premier thinks by his very appearance in the television commercials the Speaker said he found offensive. We know the Premier thought it was okay to waste hundreds of thousands of taxpayers' dollars on this self-serving propaganda.

Clearly, we need a legislative committee to get to the bottom of this contempt. We need to know who in the Premier's office was responsible for this. We need to know under whose direction those people were acting. We need to know if the Premier himself knew of and approved of this ad campaign. Personally, I can't help but think that given the very tight control that the Premier's office exercises on the public service and the massive amounts of money involved, it's almost impossible to believe that the Premier and his cabinet didn't know of and approve of this campaign in advance.

Let's cut to the chase. Why did this government and this minister run this massive advertising campaign? The answer is that they were forcing on Ontarians some



massive changes they knew the public would not accept. They did it because they knew their policies were bad and unless their spin doctors ran a full-corps press, Ontarians just wouldn't buy what they were selling. But guess what? They aren't fooling anybody. Confusing them, yes, but fooling them, definitely not.

On Monday night I went to a meeting in downtown Toronto, a meeting protesting the Premier's and this minister's megacity scheme. This was a group that started out a few weeks ago as a simple handful of people. Two weeks ago it had grown to 350 people, then 650 and now 1,500. Who knows how much it will continue to grow.

I say to the Premier and the minister very directly: You can try to stem the tide of democracy, you can try to divert it or run around it, but in the end you're going to be swept up by that tide. The Premier and the minister casually dismiss those 1,500 people. Will they so casually dismiss the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Toronto? This morning the president of that board of trade, the largest board of trade or chamber of commerce in Canada, spoke to the media. Here's what he had to say about the Harris government dumping social services on the local governments: "This could accelerate the flight of business from older jurisdictions and potentially —

**The Speaker:** I'm really having great difficulty understanding how this ties into the referral motion.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order, the member for Brant-Haldimand.

**Mr McGuinty:** I think there is some comfort to be found in all of this. It's comforting to know that in spite of all of the public dollars hijacked by this government and spent on partisan propaganda, in spite of an advertising blitz that equals if not surpasses the advertising that a party spends in a total election campaign, in spite of this massive contempt for the people of Ontario, in spite of it all, Ontarians can see through this government, and therein lies the real hope for this province.

In closing, let me reiterate why this ruling of contempt should be of concern to members of the governing party and why it's so important not only for the democratic workings of this Legislature but very directly to the people of this province. This decision is important because it says that every single member of this Legislature has a role to play in governing this province. The Premier and the cabinet do not make the laws; we do, all of us here do.

I say very directly to the backbenchers of the government: Don't let the train drivers in the Premier's office railroad you into going against the best interests of the people you were elected to represent. Don't forget those who sent you, and don't forget what you were sent to do.

As legislators, we must all reflect on the message the Speaker delivered yesterday. Let's hope the arrogance that has plagued and characterized the first 18 months of this government ended yesterday afternoon. Only time's going to tell.

We don't have a constitution in this country containing the words "We, the people," but that doesn't mean we are any less of a democracy. It's still we, the people, who make the laws in this province. It's still we, the people, who must be consulted before laws are proclaimed. It is

"We, the people," not "I, the Premier," nor "I, the Minister of Municipal Affairs"; it is we, the people, who lie at the heart of democracy and who rise in anger against those who threaten us. That's a lesson this government would do very well to heed in the future.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** I rise to speak to this issue with a great deal of concern. I want to say at the outset that I'm a little troubled by the tone I hear so far in this debate from some of the government members, because I think, for whatever reason, there seems to be a lack of understanding about the severity and the importance of what it is we are debating here this afternoon.

I see the motion that's before us, Speaker — coming from your ruling, a ruling that found a prima facie case of contempt as a result of a pamphlet that the ministry and the Minister of Municipal Affairs put out on Bill 104 — I find the motion in front of us and your ruling that led to that motion as being one of the most significant issues that's ever faced the Parliament of Ontario in its history. We know this is the first time a minister of the government and a ministry of the government have been found to be in contempt of the Parliament of Ontario. It's not something that happens every other week. It is a very unusual situation.

I, for one, appreciate the fact that you have taken the time and taken the care to go through the issue. Obviously I agree with the ruling you have made, and I know we're not here to debate your ruling but to debate instead what has been offered by the member for Oakwood as the next step or the remedy as a result of your finding.

I want to say again very clearly that what we are dealing with in this Legislature today and what we were dealing with yesterday is what we should be doing as the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in response to the most serious finding that any Speaker could ever find against any branch of a government. That distinction between the government and the Parliament of Ontario is inherent in what's before us today. I want to stress that, because I think that even yesterday one of the senior members of the government caucus was, in comments, not appreciating the distinction between the government and the Legislative Assembly. To me, that's at the heart of what's in front of us, and it certainly is at the heart of your finding that's led to this motion in front of us today.

What has happened essentially, as I see it, is this: You, as the Speaker, have found that a branch of the government which is responsible at the end of the day to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario has breached a significant procedure in assuming, through the pamphlet they put out, that passage of that bill was a fait accompli; in assuming that the Legislative Assembly was not necessary to the process, that it was superfluous, that it was sufficient for the minister of the day to stand up and say, "We've introduced the bill; it is therefore almost as if it's passed."

What your ruling clearly said was: "Sorry, it doesn't work that way, folks, it doesn't work that way, ladies and gentlemen, because we have an institution in this province called the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which has powers, which has rights, to which all of us who happen to be elected have responsibilities, upholding the reality, the fact that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



remains supreme, over the Premier, over the Minister of Municipal Affairs, over any other minister, indeed over any member of the government and indeed over any individual member of this assembly."

That is the rule of law under which we function.

1420

The significance to me of your finding, Speaker, is that in calling to task and in calling to order in this case the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, you have once again reiterated that long-held view and that long-held reality in our process of governance that it is this assembly, not the Premier, not the minister, but this assembly that at the end of the day has to make the decisions as to what laws we will function under as the society we know called Ontario.

That is beyond reproach, that is beyond discussion. I stress that because I still, in listening to the government members, hear that they have not quite appreciated that distinction. We continue to hear from members: "Well, what you found, Speaker, was, yes, a *prima facie* case of contempt, but we're not quite sure what that means." Yesterday the government House leader went as far as saying, "It may be that there is a *prima facie* case of contempt, or maybe not."

There is no debating it, Speaker. You found that the government, through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and through the Minister of Municipal Affairs, in its actions in putting out a pamphlet which deemed that the legislation for all intents and purposes had already been passed, was indeed in contempt of this Parliament. The members across can try and draw all kinds of parallels they want in terms of individual MPPs, statements on their letterheads or indeed pamphlets individual MPPs may put out, but that quite frankly is not the point. What we are talking about here and what the motion in front of us deals with is the actions of the government, the actions of a ministry, not the actions of individual members. Individual members, within the confines of the rules that we function under, have lots of freedom to be able to issue whatever political statements they want, stating whatever political view they want to express.

But when you have a ministry and when you have a minister that assume in what goes out officially on behalf of the government, not as an individual member but on behalf of the government, that what is contained in a piece of legislation, which had simply been tabled in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario at the time this pamphlet was put out, somehow is sufficient and that they can deem and can say, "This is what will happen," clearly is an infringement upon the process, is an infringement upon the rights and the responsibilities and the respect that is due to this Parliament.

In looking at this issue and at the motion that's in front of us, I come at it first and foremost with that very clear understanding in my mind. I belaboured that point particularly because I know that for some members of the government side — and I'm choosing my words very carefully — they may not have yet fully appreciated, and I say this with all due respect to all individual members of this House, the distinction that exists between members of the government side and the government, because at the end of the day we know that under our system a lot

of power resides in the government, ie, the cabinet, we know that a lot of power resides in the hands of the Premier and the Premier's office, but we know that at the end of the day the degree to which that power can be exercised is always, always subject to the latitude that this Parliament is prepared to afford those offices and the people who hold those offices.

I say particularly to the members of the government side who are not members of the government, because they are not members of cabinet, that they particularly, as members of this assembly, have on this issue probably the most important responsibility of any members or any group of members in this Legislative Assembly. It is for them to carry the responsibility in determining how to vote on this motion that they in fact will decide to uphold or not the rights of this Parliament to continue to be supreme over the exercise of power by the Premier and by the individual ministers.

That's really what's at stake here, Speaker, because the motion, in calling that the government be censured for its contemptible advertising campaign, is clearly saying that as a Legislative Assembly, we want to be clear that we do not condone the actions of this government as exercised through the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I think that is an action and a step that every single member of this assembly, including those members from the government caucus, should have no hesitation in supporting. They should have no hesitation in supporting it because in doing so they would be continuing to uphold the tradition of our laws in this province that say that government always remains subject to the latitude and the powers afforded to it by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

If they require any further support or any further reasons as to why they should have no trouble in supporting this motion, we need only look at the words that were spoken yesterday by the Minister of Municipal Affairs himself. I have to say I take at face value his apology, standing in this House and clearly saying that he respected your ruling, he accepted your ruling and he expressed his apology to you, to this assembly and to all members of this assembly for the actions that he took and for the actions that his ministry has taken. In accepting your ruling, he has to therefore be saying that he's accepting that you have found him to be in contempt. What troubles me is that when I hear some of the other government caucus members debating this issue, I don't hear that same acceptance. I hear an effort to retry the issue here.

Let me try to put it in very simple terms that perhaps take it out of the context of this Legislative Assembly. The issue, as I see it, has been tried. You have found the minister and the ministry to be in contempt. There's no debating that. We're not here to retry the issue. We're not here to redebate whether in fact the minister is in contempt. We're not here to question what that means in terms of whether the minister did something wrong or not. He did. He is in contempt of this House. That is so clear. Those are powers that we bestow, through our parliamentary traditions, upon the Speaker, and the Speaker has made that finding. That finding is not debatable. That finding is not to be retried. That finding



is not to be questioned or re-examined. Yet, Speaker, when I listen to some of the government members opposite, I get very clearly the sense that what they want to do is to retry the issue, that what they want to do is sort of have another debate about whether in fact your ruling was correct or not.

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** You don't want to go to committee, then.

**Mr Silipo:** The Minister of Agriculture and Food says, "You don't want to go to committee." I'm going to get to that point, I say to the minister. I have no trouble with this issue going to committee, but if it goes to committee, I would say we had better be really clear about why it's going to committee. It's not going to committee, as I see it, so that we can rehash the whole issue and understand what the minister did or didn't do. That's already been determined. The Speaker has made his ruling on that point. So if you think that by sending this to committee you're going to come back with a different finding, you haven't understood what the Speaker has ruled. You can come back with whatever finding you want; it will not change the reality that the Speaker has found the Minister of Municipal Affairs to be in contempt of this Parliament. That's a reality.

1430

I want to say further on this point that, to be honest with you, a part of me questions the usefulness of the second part of this motion, going to committee, because I'm not sure what is to be achieved by going to committee. I will listen to the debate and I will make a decision on this, as others will, at the end of the day.

Speaker, if the concern is that all of a sudden we need to have guidelines established, as some members have said, as a result of your finding, that's an issue that perhaps needs some addressing, but again I would say to you, I don't think we need to be belabouring the point in terms of what guidelines we need. The clear guidelines that I heard you reiterate in your ruling, in your finding of contempt, is that no ministry and no government can ever and should ever assume that by simply introducing legislation, that legislation can be deemed to have been passed. It's so simple. It doesn't require a great deal of debate; it doesn't require a great deal of perusal.

Members are holding something up. I don't know what it is, Speaker. If they want me to respond to it, I'd be happy to, if they'd get me a copy of it. Again, I say to them — because what I suspect they're holding up may be something that's come from a member of this Parliament — that the issue here is not what each of us puts out in our individual letters or newsletters. That's not the issue here; that's not what the Speaker's ruling dealt with; that's not what the motion in front of us deals with. We are talking here about the actions of a government and the responsibility of a government to be held accountable and to continue to be held accountable to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

**Mr Peter L. Preston (Brant-Haldimand):** Can't you guys take yes for an answer?

**Mr Silipo:** One of the members opposite asks if I can't take yes for an answer? I haven't heard a yes from the

government members. The only thing close to yes I heard was from the minister responsible for this débâcle, who did at least apologize. I want to give him credit for that: He did apologize for his actions.

But I would have expected that every single member of the Mike Harris team standing up and debating this issue would have tried to take the same tone that the minister himself has taken on this, and accept responsibility, rather than try and run away from the responsibility, because I say to my friends opposite that you can't have it both ways. You can't want to be a member of this government when it suits you and when one of you is found to be in contempt try to say, "Maybe it is; maybe it isn't." No, it is. The Minister of Municipal Affairs has been found to be in contempt. That is beyond debate.

You can make whatever parallel you want to other individual mailings. You can make whatever parallel you want to the need for guidelines. The basic guideline is there. The Speaker has set it out. He has said that you cannot as a government, whether it's you or any other government in the future, issue any pamphlets, as was done here, you cannot put out any form of advertising, you cannot take any positions that assume that the process of the Parliament is irrelevant. You can talk about, "If the legislation passes, this is what it will do," you can talk about, "This is our intention if it passes through the Legislative Assembly and through the process," but you can never assume that by simply tabling the legislation, for all intents and purposes, you've passed it.

We will continue at this point, because it is fundamental to the understanding of how our process of government works, our process of democracy works in this province. We know that at the end of the day the likelihood is that all of the members of the PC caucus will vote in favour of this legislation, but we also know that legislation is sometimes amended, we know that legislation is sometimes withdrawn. Both of those things have happened during the life of this government, based on public input, based on the government's assessment and the minister's assessment as discussions go through.

I see the Minister of Labour. She could stand up and give us lots of examples of when she's withdrawn provisions that upon reflection she has found to be not particularly wise.

We heard on this particular bill that's led to this issue, on Bill 104, at least one member of the government side express some real concerns about this bill, the member for Scarborough West, Mr Brown. I don't know how he's going to vote on this at the end of the day, but he may end up voting against it. There may be other members of the government side who end up voting against it, and then what happens? Maybe the bill won't pass, and therein is the problem: in assuming, as the minister did, that all he had to do was to introduce the legislation and he could assume, because he had a majority of Conservative members in this House, that the legislation was going to in fact pass.

The likelihood is there, the probability even, but at the end of the day, that isn't the point. The point is that Parliament remains supreme. If we ever lose sight of that reality, then we may as well just all pack it in. You may



as well, then, in fact reduce the 130 members in this House not just to 103, you may as well just reduce them down to one, because you don't need the rest of us. You can just elect the Premier and let him or her do whatever you want. We won't need a Speaker. They can just rule however they wish.

In other places, that's called dictatorship. It's something that many of our forefathers and foremothers fought against, I would remind members. I think we take pride, and certainly I take pride as a member of this assembly, in the continuing role that this assembly can and indeed needs to continue to play in looking at proposals that come from the government side, because they have the responsibility and the right and the power to bring forward legislation that they feel will improve the quality of life of people across this province in whatever measures they wish. It's up to them to bring those forward, but then it's up to the Parliament, through its process, to determine whether that is the correct action to take.

That process involves talking with people, it involves continuing to listen to people, because the democratic process we function under goes far beyond simply casting our ballots once every four or five years. That's a key part of it. As a result of that, we give direction, we set a course. I am mindful and respectful of the direction and the course voters in Ontario chose last June 1995. I am respectful of that. But equally, I expect that members of the Mike Harris government would continue to be respectful not just of the rest of us who are not part of that team but indeed continue to be respectful of — as any of the rest of us, the New Democrats or the Liberals had we formed the government, would have had to continue to be respectful of — the population out there which has elected us and which expects and requires and needs to continue to know that whatever government is in place, that government will never try to assume upon itself, as opposed to the Legislative Assembly, the powers that can only rest in this assembly.

The process of making decisions about what laws to bring about also involves, as I said, not just being elected once every four or five years but continuing to talk to the public, continuing to hear from the public and continuing to understand the concerns of the public, because things change, issues change, particularly an issue like the one that's led to this problem, an issue like the amalgamation of the various municipalities in Metropolitan Toronto into a megacity, an issue on which the best the minister and the Premier of the day can say is that they did not support the position they are putting forward now when they ran for office. The worst that can be said is that they in fact are acting completely opposite to what indeed they promised during the last election. For that reason too, we have reason to be concerned and to be worried about what in fact this government is doing and how in fact the government members are responding to this very, very important motion before us.

I would say I expressed some concerns, or some hesitation rather, about this matter going to committee because I'm not entirely sure, I have to confess, what the point of that is, but I'm absolutely clear on the need for the motion, particularly in its first part, to be adopted by this Legislative Assembly. It is crucial that we say, as a

Legislative Assembly, partisanship aside, that we want to continue to uphold the supremacy of this Parliament, which I believe is the essence of the ruling you have made on this question.

1440

I would think, Speaker, that if the government as a government wanted to show proper respect for the finding you have made and the motion that is now in front of us, they, without having to be coerced, without being demanded by us or by others, in and of themselves would have already taken, and I think there is still time for them to take, some steps to remedy the situation. I think the minister's apology was a useful first step. But I believe that if Mike Harris has any respect whatsoever left for the democratic process and for this assembly, it would be incumbent upon him to go beyond that, to withdraw the ads.

I appreciate that your ruling did not find those to be in contempt, but because of the relationship here — I'm talking now about what the minister and the Premier can do to show full compliance and full respect for the ruling — I would say that the government should withdraw its ads and offer in some way, either through their caucus funds or more appropriately through their party funds, to repay to the public coffers the money spent on this brochure. I think that would show the necessary level of respect this government needs to show for this Parliament.

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** You guys would have to pay five times.

**Mr Silipo:** I hear the minister across continuing to talk about what partisan flyers are put out by others. I have to say again that I'm a bit nonplussed, because here's a member of this Legislative Assembly with great seniority who I think still has not appreciated the significance of what's in front of us. This is not a question of a party flyer that's been put out. This is not a question or concern around a caucus flyer or an individual MPP flyer. This is a question of the government, because of government advertising, having been found to be in contempt. I don't know how many ways people want to try to cut that but that's the reality.

This government has been found to be in contempt of the Legislative Assembly, the first time ever, in the over 100 years of history of this Parliament, that has taken place. That is an inescapable fact; that is something you will never be able to move away from. What you can do is take some steps to show that you have still, even at this late time, some semblance of respect left for the parliamentary process in this province.

The minister has taken the first step. He has issued an apology. The government, whether it's through the government House leader or through the Premier himself, should take the next steps, and those are, again, to withdraw the ads, repay the money into the public coffers and show that they have a real understanding and appreciation of this Parliament and what this Parliament is all about.

I look forward to the continuing debate and I will be listening most earnestly to hear any sense of understanding and any sense of responsibility being taken by members of the government side who, I want to remind them — at least most of them — are not members of the government. Their first responsibility is to this Legislative



Assembly, to the people who elected them here, and to show that they in their actions, in supporting this motion of censure, understand what has happened here is that the worst finding that could ever be found against a government has been found in this case. The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario has found the Minister of Municipal Affairs, in his actions, to be in contempt of this Parliament.

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** That's not true. He did not.

**Mr Silipo:** Well, you hear it again, Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Silipo:** A prima facie case is not the same as contempt? I say to the members opposite, I don't know what books they've been reading. A prima facie case means a case of contempt has been established. The words could not be clearer. Maybe, Speaker, you need to explain it to them again, because that seems to me to be the only way these folks over here will understand that what you found was the Minister of Municipal Affairs to be in contempt of this Parliament. They can't cut it any other way. That's the reality.

**The Speaker:** I appreciate the opportunity. I think I'll take the member for Dovercourt up on "prima facie." It's on first appearance, which means —

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Minister of Environment, thank you for your help.

It means basically that what we have here is, on first appearance, evidence that the Speaker says warrants a debate or a motion by the Legislature. I can't personally find anyone in contempt. The only body that may do that is us. So I see it as on first appearance. I then say, yes, there's enough information here to bring before the Legislature, and you must find: You must do the finding, you must do the discovery, you must decide among yourselves if there's enough evidence. It's here for that exact reason. That's why the member for Oakwood moved the motion.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I rise on a matter which I believe to be of some urgency in terms of the order of proceedings of the House. Ironically it does relate to the matter that is before us, but it is a different issue and I believe the urgency compels me to bring it forward at this time.

You may be aware that on the very day we are debating a motion of censure against a government which you have found to be in contempt of the Legislature by having appeared to take action or provide information as if legislation had been enacted when in fact it was still before the House, on that very day, the Minister of Education has seen fit to announce his intention to appoint commissioners to head —

**The Speaker:** Would you take your seat. I appreciate what the member is saying. We are in the middle of a debate. It must be disposed of before any points of privilege may arise. It's not a point of order and it may in fact be a point of privilege. What I'm saying from my position here is that we must dispose of this motion before us before I may hear any more points of privilege.

**Mrs McLeod:** May I just —

**The Speaker:** Quickly, then.

**Mrs McLeod:** Mr Speaker, I will look for your guidance. The reason I rise on it at this point is that the fact that the government has seen fit to act as if legislation was to be enacted, even though it's only in second reading, is at 3 o'clock this afternoon to trigger in turn the resignation of an MPP, and that in turn will trigger the necessity of a by-election. I just feel that does make it of some urgency.

**The Speaker:** I'm having a great deal of difficulty understanding, as it is a point of order, even the privilege that would be involved regardless. I would ask that we move on with this debate. I'll move forward to the government side. I'm not saying I'm going to reserve ruling — I'm not — but would just take the opportunity to allow this debate to continue.

**Mrs McLeod:** If you would give me some direction as to how to place it, it is, I believe, another very blatant example of —

**The Speaker:** You'll have to wait until we dispose of this issue. It's just that simple.

Minister of privatization with responsibility for —

**Hon Rob Sampson (Minister without Portfolio [Privatization]):** Minister without portfolio with responsibility for privatization. I know it's a long title but we'll get to it shortly.

I wanted to thank you, Mr Speaker, for the clarification you just delivered to the House today because I think it was important to clarify what exactly this debate is that we're having today. In anticipation of the fact that I might have brought your attention to that point of clarification, Mr Speaker, I did some homework —

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Sampson:** Yes, it sounds strange, but I did do some homework on what those two Latin words mean and how they might relate to your decision. It's quite clear that indeed should you have allowed to continue this discussion that would have alluded to the fact that you have made a determination of contempt, I would have thought that would have been a contempt and a removal of our privileges and my privileges to be part of the House that will be engaged in the debate of that fact. I'm glad that you were able to rise and speak to that particular point.

1450

I'm cautious of your previous instructions to other speakers to try to stick to the debate and the item being debated, which is the motion from the honourable member for Oakwood, and so I will attempt to do that, and I know you will not waste very much time should I stray from that particular topic.

I think it's important if we start to discuss the issue of whether there has been in fact, as the motion suggests, a "contemptible advertising campaign," and that is how the motion reads — I know you had a ruling yesterday that allows a narrowing of that particular definition to the item at hand, which is an actual advertising brochure produced by the ministry — I think it's relevant to go over perhaps the situations in other jurisdictions, in other Houses, as they relate to alleged incidents of contempt, alleged incidents of breach of privilege, so that we can have a better understanding in the context of this partic-



ular motion how this document that is being discussed here relates to a potential or an alleged incident of contempt.

The trailing clause to the motion suggests that the matter be sent to the Legislative Assembly committee for consideration. I believe that was an offer of the House leader yesterday, and there may well be some merit in doing that, but let me speak to the issue of advertising in general.

I know that you and your ruling did take a look at what was raised by the two honourable members opposite as the basket of advertising that we're considering. I would hope that this House wouldn't agree that the government should be removed of its responsibility for communicating with its electorate. As a member of this House, I certainly would expect that to be a privilege of mine and I would hope that the other honourable members here share that opinion.

I know members opposite have risen in the past in this chamber during this session on a number of occasions and criticized this government for not being open and not disclosing to the electorate various items of our agenda. They have indeed risen on questions and I believe they have risen on points of privilege and points of order on that very subject. I would hasten to say that I would be surprised if they were now to stand in their places and say that the government does not have a responsibility to communicate with the electorate; clearly we do.

Our responsibility as government is to outline where we believe our government policies are taking this province. It's a requirement, I believe, of government, it's an obligation on us, and it's frankly an expectation of the electorate to understand where their government is going and where they believe we are leading this province, especially as we come to the turn of the century, a very important point in our history in this province.

I want to add to the points that were raised by the minister yesterday when he stood in this House and spoke to this chamber about this particular document. He indicated in his delivery that the motive behind the pamphlet of the government on the proposal to unite the cities of Metro Toronto to create the one city of Toronto was an attempt to inform the affected parties on what they should expect to see when our government continues with that particular piece of legislation, what they would expect to see as the result of the bill being passed. Again I say, as I said earlier, I think that's an obligation of this government: to stand in here, yes, and to communicate outside this chamber to the electorate on what we are attempting to do with respect to any particular piece of legislation, and the minister clarified that.

I would say to you that this particular document we're discussing today also contained information as it would relate to other sections of the GTA, one that I in fact come from in the region of Peel. It attempted to indicate to the electorate how our vision of the one Toronto may impact on what the citizens of the region of Peel can expect to see as a result of the legislation being passed.

The dates outlined in the pamphlet, frankly, are trying to demonstrate to the electorate that the government does indeed have an implementation plan with respect to our agenda for change for the city of Toronto. I think it

would not be correct to stand again in this chamber, to stand outside of this chamber and say, "We believe we have a vision of Toronto but we won't tell you when we believe that vision will occur."

I don't know how the people, the voters of this province, the voters in this city would be able to comment if we didn't have the opportunity to lay out to them our timing and when we believe these changes would become effective. That's clearly one of the questions that I would have expected the electorate to question us on when we outlined what our agenda for change was.

Mr Speaker, I say to you that the government has an obligation here — I know you're patiently awaiting further points that I'm raising here — to inform the electorate on its agenda and to establish how we believe that agenda will unfold over the next period of time. It's an attempt to inform people, as the minister stood in this House yesterday; it's not an attempt to mislead or to trample over the rights and privileges of the members in this House.

I want to speak to a couple of other precedents, two of them that you were asked to look at by the members opposite who stood on the point. The member for Algoma was one of them and the member for Oakwood was the other. As you know, one relates to the federal Parliament in 1989 and it was a GST ad. The other was a particular advertisement in 1994 as it related to the then Bill 77, an advertisement that appeared in the Ottawa-Carleton area.

As you quite clearly understood, sir, the government's newspaper advertisement in the Ottawa-Carleton ad contained a statement that, "The bill will be law well in advance of the official closing date for the nominations of October 14, 1994." I would put to you, and it's the attempt to discuss the motive here which I think we're talking about on this particular motion, that this particular language is far in excess of the reference to dates that we see appearing in the document under question. There's an actual date mentioned of October 14, 1994, and the fact that certain things will occur, as the language was here, well in advance of that particular date.

The issue as it relates to the federal point that was raised and was discussed centred around a GST advertisement. That advertisement clearly stated, "The date Canada's federal sales tax will change to effect the GST," and it established that particular date and asked readers to "please save this notice." I would put to you that this is far in excess of the language that we see contained in this particular ad.

There are a couple of other points that were not raised by the honourable members opposite which I believe continue to establish and confirm the point that I'm speaking to as it relates to the nature of this document and other items that were referred to in the debate so far.

In December 1989 in the National Assembly in Quebec — and these two instances are in fact in Quebec — the opposition House leader of the National Assembly requested that the Président, the Speaker, rule on the content of brochures published by a certain commission of the government. The brochures contained information on a new system which was to come into force in January 1990, and the opposition asserted at that point in



time that the rights of the members had been ignored or breached, a violation of privilege, as has been discussed here.

1500

In that particular situation, the Speaker of the National Assembly ruled that, unlike the GST example that we have had discussed here, and I'm quoting, sir, "The information in question had not been made public in newspapers but was limited to a narrow audience with common interests." That of course is what —

**The Speaker:** Member from Mississauga West, Minister, I just want to be clear that I'm not here to listen to debate about the merits of previous findings by previous Speakers and my finding. I'm not here to listen to what you consider to be far in excess of my findings as opposed to other findings. I'm here to hear debate on the motion. I've offered some latitude, I think, to all parties surrounding that motion. I offer no latitude on the finding. I ask you to stick to topic.

**Hon Mr Sampson:** I appreciate your instruction to me to speak to the topic, but the motion being raised, if I can, Mr Speaker, is that we're debating the motion that, as it's spoken here and written here, the government be censured for its contemptible advertising campaign. I'm trying to draw attention to advertising campaigns that have been drawn into question in other jurisdictions so that we can have that comparison and as a result of that comparison —

**The Speaker:** I think I was fairly clear to the member. I said very specifically, you drew the analogy between the two examples I brought forward. I don't want the analogies. The finding has been done. I ask you to speak to the motion. Let us move on to the motion.

**Mr Bradley:** I'm telling J.B.

**Hon Mr Sampson:** The honourable member wants to speak to J.B. He might have some difficulty doing that, given the fact that he has passed away. Thank you very much for your reference.

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will redirect my discussion. I believe it should be in order for me to continue to discuss, since we have reference to them here in this particular motion, advertising campaigns and the relevance of advertising campaigns to a government's, as I said earlier, obligation to communicate with its electorate. The previous governments, and I say that to both the Liberal members and the NDP members, must have clearly believed that there was a very serious obligation of governments to communicate with their electorate in regard to their agenda, and I would say a very serious obligation, they considered, if one were to govern their level of seriousness and the degree of seriousness by the dollars actually being spent.

In fact the previous NDP government was so concerned about communicating with their electorate on their government agenda that during the time that this House did not sit prior to the 1995 election, they spent a considerable amount of money communicating and delivering on their obligation to communicate to their electorate as it relates to what they were intending to do, even though what they were intending to do could clearly not have been executed because this House didn't even sit. We had a government that was prepared to spend thousands and

thousands of dollars, the NDP government, delivering on its obligation to communicate with its electorate when nobody was in this House to deal with the legislation or the issues or the regulation that they were trying to communicate to their electorate on.

Mr Speaker, I would put to you that now they find it objectionable that anybody on the government side communicate with its electorate on its agenda even when this House has been convened especially for the purposes of considering the issues and the points which we intend to deliver to Ontarians on. They were not prepared to sit; we are. They were not prepared to call a special session of the Legislature.

Mr Speaker, I see you glancing over at my side. I know you're quite engaged in this discussion. But we are talking about an advertising campaign, as the motion says, and I am trying to speak to advertising campaigns, and I've been very close to that. I've been trying to speak to the intent of the advertising campaigns, and I am putting to you, sir, the point that if this, in the position of the opposition and the member for Oakwood, is a contemptible advertising campaign, it is nowhere near and it could not possibly be, because we are dealing with issues which would come before this House, have been tabled in this House, are in the process of being debated in this House, while the members opposite in the New Democratic Party were prepared to advertise on their agenda and nobody was here.

We're attempting here to discuss this issue on whether or not — and I'm again debating the motion, sir — the government should be censured for this type of activity. I put to you, sir, we should not be censured for this type of activity because we in fact are, as I started off my discussion with you, sir, delivering on our commitment to communicate, and we are sitting in this Legislature under a special sitting to discuss those very issues we have laid in front of the people of Toronto as they relate to this particular incident, as they relate to the citizens of Peel, as they relate to this particular document, as they relate to the other residents of the province and as they relate to our other agenda items.

Mr Speaker, I want to close by saying that when you rose a few minutes ago in the House to talk about the *prima facie* case, you were quite clear in saying, although the opposition has not made these statements, that you have not found guilt as it relates to this particular incident; that is the obligation and the responsibility of this House. You have clearly in your motion simply said this House should debate that issue, and in fact that's what we are doing here. But, Mr Speaker, you have not ruled — and this, I believe, is a summary of your words, since I don't have the Hansard in front of me to quote verbatim — that there is in fact a guilt relationship here; there is just, as the Latin words say, a first-appearance view of some alleged incident, that's all.

I instruct this House to consider that as it considers this particular motion, because it's important to understand that it's up to this House to determine whether or not an incident as it relates to censure has occurred, and it's up to this House to determine how that incident should be dealt with, reviewed etc, and that was the tailing item as it relates to sending the incident and the motion off to committee for their review.



**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** I rise to join in this debate with a great deal of concern about what I'm hearing from the government benches around this matter, because I do not believe we're hearing the government suggest in any way that in fact a case has been made for a finding of contempt. That's what government members, government spokespeople, have said over the last day and a half: that there has been no finding for a case to be made for contempt.

The Speaker's ruling is very clear on this matter. I want to get into that in just a moment, but let me just say that the other disturbing feature of this debate from the government benches is that they're attempting to make this into a partisan matter. I find that completely unacceptable, because this is a matter that should be non-partisan and it should concern every member of this Legislature, whether they're sitting in the fourth row or in the first row. It is for that reason we're debating this matter, which is a very serious matter, at some length. Because it is just that: a very serious matter.

We, as legislators, are charged with the responsibility for not only dealing with laws that come through this assembly, but for upholding the very essence of democracy that this Legislative Assembly represents. When the day arrives that we forget it is this Legislative Assembly that approves legislation, that passes legislation, that processes legislation, that allows for real debate to take place, that allows for some semblance of scrutiny, then we will have failed as a democracy and this will no longer be a Parliament, this will no longer be a parliamentary democracy.

1510

I think we'll all rue the day when that happens, and we're coming perilously close to that. I've sat in this Legislative Assembly for almost 12 years, and even in that period of time I see a fundamental change, a transformation taking place in the role of members of this assembly, of members who are part of a governing majority, of members who are part of the opposition, in the role of members in legislative committees and in the way in which this Legislative Assembly functions. The privileges and the obligations of members are something we take with a great deal of seriousness, because it is through them, through us as members of the Legislative Assembly, that people have the opportunity to express their democratic rights and freedoms. It is through this Legislative Assembly that this happens.

Let me go on to the substantive matter with respect to the case before us. The argument being made by government members is that there has not been a case made for contempt. The Minister of Municipal Affairs stood up in his place and apologized just yesterday to this assembly, apologized to the people of this province for his actions. Therefore, we can only conclude that he meant his apology, and if he did not, then what is he saying, "I wasn't quite serious about this; there was no contempt on my part"? In essence, the prima facie case has been made by the Speaker that the municipal affairs minister and the ministry have been found in contempt on the face of it, which is a very serious measurement by which you can establish contempt.

What we're discussing today is the motion put before us by my colleague the member for Oakwood that the government be censured by this House for its contemptible advertising campaign. All we're asking for is that the matter be referred to a committee or that the matter be dealt with, with respect to censure. If the government does not want to send this to committee, then please tell us how it is you wish to deal with this matter, how it is you wish to find some restitution for taxpayers, firstly, and how it is you wish to deal with the matter that you have been found in contempt of this Legislative Assembly, which, I repeat, is a very serious matter indeed.

We are debating here this afternoon whether in fact the very principles of our democracy have been undermined, because what did the Speaker say with regard to this matter? I want to quote some of the passages of the Speaker's findings. He refers back to the previous Speaker, who issued a stern warning to the previous government for a similar circumstance. He said it's not enough in this case to issue another warning, and therefore he found a prima facie case of contempt. So the Speaker was compelled to find that this case was a prima facie case of contempt. That's what we're dealing with here. That has been established. There's no debating that matter, as the Speaker got up in his place to suggest to the Minister without Portfolio, that to deal with this matter directly cannot be up for debate.

The Speaker went on to say that he found that the matter should be dealt with in all seriousness because the document in question, the pamphlet that was issued by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, left people "with an incorrect impression about how parliamentary democracy works in Ontario, an impression that undermines respect for our parliamentary institutions." I can think of no more serious matter than that before this House. The words are very clear: "an impression that undermines respect for our parliamentary institutions."

I can say — and I'm trying not to be partisan and I'm not trying to use loaded words, because I take this matter very seriously — I just find that it concerns me that members of the government would try to make this a partisan issue, and in fact yesterday that the government House leader would suggest that this was a matter to be considered as a non-confidence vote would before this assembly, making it a matter of partisanship. That's what I find unacceptable. I'm trying to select the words that I use very carefully, because I think members of this House have to respect not only decorum — this government started off its mandate by saying we have to do several things to change this place in the way it functions: Decorum has to be maintained, the way in which we deal with each other, the way in which debate is undertaken. We cannot undermine the principles of this Legislative Assembly and then just have some semblance of decorum, so we are debating a motion that is before us which strikes at the very heart of what is our democratic institution.

I think it is very important to understand what we're dealing with. Just to delve further into the findings of the Speaker, he went on to say, "I want to express some personal concerns about the propriety of public funds being used to advocate, through advertising, a particular



position on a matter that is before the House." He said, "Personally, I would find it offensive if taxpayer dollars were being used to convey a political or partisan message." He also went on to say, "But I feel that it's wrong for a government to attempt to influence public opinion through advertising that is paid for with public funds — which, I might add, are not available to the opposition — instead of through debate in the House." Very direct, very clear.

I think therein lies the answer as to why this government, this Minister of Municipal Affairs, must be censured by this House, because public funds were expended to propagate one viewpoint, a partisan viewpoint. It can only be described as that because this government suggested that in fact something had been passed and approved by this Legislative Assembly in law which made it a *de facto* situation. The Speaker attempted to convey that as well in his ruling, and I quote again:

"In my opinion, they," the government, "convey the impression that the passage of the requisite legislation was not necessary or was a foregone conclusion, or that the assembly and the Legislature had a pro forma, tangential, even inferior role in the legislative and lawmaking process, and in doing so, they appear to diminish the respect that is due to this House."

1520

What are we dealing with? It's the undermining of the authority of this legislative chamber, of this Legislative Assembly, to deal with legislative matters before it in respect of the passage of law before a government could go out there and suggest to the people of this province that this was already approved, that this was the case, and therefore propagating the idea that this was the case, before this Legislative Assembly had the opportunity to even examine legislation before it. In other words, executive decree was invoked. That was the impression left.

Any observer who did not understand the workings of our Legislative Assembly might come to that conclusion. That's an important distinction to make because in our system the executive branch and the legislative branch are intertwined, in the role of not only the cabinet but the Premier, the entire majority government. Their power is derived from this Legislative Assembly. That is the distinction to be made, unlike the American system where they have a clearly defined division between executive and legislative roles.

Then it behooves any government to take proper care to pass legislation, not only observing and respecting the traditions of this assembly, the customs, but upholding the very processes by which we govern ourselves. This move on the part of the Minister of Municipal Affairs undermined the importance of this Legislative Assembly to deal with matters before it.

I say once again to government members that this is not a matter to be taken lightly. If we've come to the point where decisions can be taken by cabinet and executive decrees issued bypassing the Legislative Assembly, then we have seriously damaged our parliamentary system. We should not and cannot accept this as a precedent, and that is why the Speaker stood in his place and found that there was a *prima facie* case of contempt.

So what are we here to do today, what are we here debating about? We're debating this matter. We're debating the motion that's before every single one of us for consideration of a finding of contempt. What are we considering? We are considering whether the government should be censured, whether this minister should be censured, and what to do about it.

I find the government is not forthcoming on this because it's not attempting to deal with this in the light it should be dealt with. They're not attempting to deal with this in a straightforward fashion. Attempting to make this a matter to be debated with respect to its being a vote of non-confidence puts it in a partisan light, and that is not the way in which this matter should be dealt with. It is not partisan and therefore should be dealt with in this assembly and dealt with by members of this Legislative Assembly, either in committee or in this House. Further to this debate, every single member of this assembly should accept this motion, not only uphold it but vote for it.

Ultimately, I think to myself that there are members on that side of the House, the government side, who think that this is a waste of time, that this is another cheap trick by the opposition to delay, to be obstructionist. I assure members of the government that this is not our intention and I want to tell you that if one day you should happen to be sitting on the opposition benches, which I think you will most likely do come the next election, and the roles are reversed, because I've been on that side of the House, you will accept the fact that there are very few privileges and very few means by which the opposition has a say. Ultimately we are talking about upholding this institution for the rights of the minority to be heard and for the right, that is our democratic freedom, to have a say. If we lose that, we lose, as I said earlier, the essence of our democracy.

Everything this government is doing is unprecedented. Not only is this finding of contempt unprecedented and the motion that's before the House, but we are dealing with a government that has unprecedented reforms and is dealing with those reforms with unprecedented speed and, according to the Speaker's ruling yesterday, unprecedented arrogance. That's my slant on this, because if the government House leader had been able to put forward his motion and it was found in order, indeed to be a motion for non-confidence, then he would have undermined everything the Speaker ruled on. This is not a matter of non-confidence; this is a matter, as I say, for all members to take seriously.

This is not wasteful. What we deal with before this Legislative Assembly is not a waste of time, is not a waste. In fact, it is this government's haste that's making more waste than we can account for. Moving with lightening speed has caused all of these repercussions, has led to this unprecedented situation being dealt with before this Legislative Assembly. It is their haste that is causing those unprecedented conditions. They cannot ignore the people of this province. They cannot ignore the people's right to have a say on a variety of issues.

This is a case that has to be dealt with and remedied. I say to the government, when we're talking about censuring the government, it is about restitution. I think



it would be in order, and I think my colleagues would agree with me, that this government should repay the taxpayers of this province the \$300,000 or \$400,000 it cost to put out that erroneous, contemptible piece of advertising propaganda by the government. Repay the taxpayers of this province; that would be the right thing to do. Furthermore, I think it is incumbent upon this Minister of Municipal Affairs and the government to make clear that there was a bias, that there was a prejudging of what was to take place in this Legislative Assembly with respect to the laws that were before this assembly that hadn't been dealt with yet, and this government took for granted that this was the case and was passing it off as such to the electorate. That is contemptible, in every way possible.

As I said earlier, it is undermining the very democratic principles that we live by and we chose to live by in this Legislative Assembly. This government should do the right thing. Every single member of this assembly should not only uphold the motion, indeed claim that it is the right thing to be dealt with and debated, but should support it. I call on members of the government, on the backbenchers, to do the right thing, because you'll be held to account in your own ridings if you fail to do that.

1530

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** I'm very pleased to be able to spend some time to discuss a matter that I believe is very important in terms of its implications on how this government generally tends to do things around this House and outside of this House.

The Speaker has found that a clear case of contempt has been established, and what we hear from the members of government continually is a denial of this fact. You hear a number of people talking about this matter as if it were a mere technicality, as if somehow it was a simple error, and so: "We would describe that error as a technicality. Please let us move beyond this debate because there is no debate." Some would describe it merely as inadvertence, a simple error, a simple mistake, that there was no serious intent behind the way this article was written and therefore they almost beg for forgiveness in some way and say, "Let us please move on to other important matters of this House."

But I argue that this is not a simple matter of technicality or inadvertence. I think that there's something more premeditated in the way this government does things. That's why it's not quite simple to dismiss us here in this assembly and the public with wording such as "technicality" or "inadvertence" or further saying that this motion is not particularly relevant by pointing to other things that other governments may have done, such as saying, "We are spending much less than the other governments before us," as if to suggest that what they have now done is not so pertinent. All of these arguments are very weak as a way of establishing some argument as to why they should not be taking responsibility for what they've done.

The final argument I also heard from the member for Mississauga West is to say: "We as a government" — meaning themselves — "have a responsibility to communicate to our electorate. In fact, we have an obligation to communicate with our constituents." No one on this side of the House is saying to the government that it

cannot communicate with the constituents or the electorate. No one is denying them that right, including the Speaker, who admits that they have a perfect right to do so because they are the ones in government and they are the ones who are the policymakers and have a duty to communicate with the electorate.

But to hear the member for Mississauga West, you would think that we were denying them that right to communicate. That's not what we are doing, and the Speaker himself has said that is their perfect right to do so, so why we continue to hear these arguments suggesting that somehow there's some other argument here than the case that has been established, the contempt that has been established as a result of the way this pamphlet, which my colleague in front of me has, has been written? I would like to show the way it has been written.

The Speaker himself made a few points and said:

"I am very concerned by the ministry pamphlet, which is worded more definitively than the commercial and the press release. To name but a few examples, the brochure claims that 'new city wards will be created,' that 'work on building the new city will start in 1997,' and that 'the new city of Toronto will reduce the number of municipal politicians.'"

The Speaker has concerns about this, and so did we. That's why we began to raise this very issue, because we felt it was inappropriate to use language of the sort that has been read to speak to something that has yet not been passed by this assembly. The Speaker rightfully found that this was in contempt and we found it therefore — not just as a result of his decision but before this decision that this was contemptible — a contemptible action, an abuse of one's privilege as a government to use public dollars and spend them in this way, that it is an abuse of public dollars to spend them in this way: to publicize, to politicize the public in a certain direction.

This pamphlet, when folded, makes it appear as if it were any ordinary pamphlet distributed by any grass-roots organization. You pick it up and you say, "Interesting; it's nice and blue; the paper weight is of considerable substance," and so you look at it and you say, "It's an interesting pamphlet." It takes you a little while to discover that there is a trillium and next to the trillium, "Ontario."

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** I'd ask that you put that down. I would ask you to leave it on your desk. You're referring to it. We're debating the motion and I would ask you to bring your comments within that and not use a demonstration.

**Mr Marchese:** You're saying not to use this pamphlet as a demonstration? This whole motion is based on this pamphlet.

**The Acting Speaker:** We are in debate and I would ask the member for Fort York not to use the demonstration. We appreciate that the discussion arose from the pamphlet. You have shown it and now I would ask you just to leave it on the desk.

**Mr Marchese:** All right. This is the subject upon which we are debating, of course, and this is the object of our motion. To raise it and to show the public what we are speaking about I think helps the public to understand a little more clearly what we are talking about. It is most



difficult to separate this motion from this pamphlet. I'm not quite sure of the ruling, but if you insist, then I'll do that. I'll put it down and continue to refer to it.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm very patient. I think I'm being very patient. I have explained once or twice and I would ask the member for Fort York to come to order.

**Mr Bisson:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I don't mean to be combative but I would just point out that members of the Legislature often use materials to be able to deliver their speeches, including printed documents that you may have collected through clippings, speeches that you may have written, letters that you would have received from constituents or in some cases publications, and as long as a member utilizes that in the vein of being able to address the motion, it is perfectly in order.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'd like to explain myself just a little bit further, that yes, we do allow people to use pamphlets and papers to read from and so on, but we don't allow the use of props. It is my opinion, when it's being held up at length, that it becomes a prop. Thank you. I would ask the —

**Mr Bisson:** On a further point of order, Mr Speaker: Am I to understand you are saying the government publication is a prop?

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Fort York.

**Mr Marchese:** Mr Speaker, I was hoping for some greater clarification from you about this. I quite clearly don't see this as a prop. But I think I'll wait for the Speaker. Any further clarity on this matter?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** You want some ruling, then you don't want to accept it.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** This is ridiculous, Norm. Every member of this House reads from all kinds of publications. It's just ridiculous.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** Norm, Dave Johnson was holding it up yesterday. He was reading from it and referring to it. What's he supposed to do?

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Sudbury East and the Minister of Environment and Energy, come to order, please.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** You're rising on a point of order?

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** No, you will rise on a point of order or —

**Mrs McLeod:** All right, I will rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. I would ask in relationship to the ruling that you've just made whether you would determine for me whether, if I were to be debating Bill 104, the education bill, holding up the education bill would be considered a demonstration and therefore not in order.

**The Acting Speaker:** That is not a point of order. The Chair recognizes the member for Fort York.

1540

**Mr Marchese:** I appreciate the assistance from the member. I find it very difficult of course to accept your ruling, but naturally you are the Speaker. I found no greater clarity from what you said that would help me to continue.

I think, for the benefit of the public that is watching, many of them don't have a clue what we're talking about.

This merely allows the public to understand that this is the same brochure that they might have received in their doors and that that is what we're talking about, from which we have established a clear case of contempt. This brochure that I was showing in my hands is the object of our displeasure here and object of disagreement.

We are not disagreeing with the member for Mississauga West when he says you have a right as a government to communicate. We didn't say that you don't have the power to do that. It would of course be ludicrous on anybody's part to say that. To suggest, as someone is saying, you can't do that is not very intelligent. So please, as a government, continue to communicate with the public, because they need to know; they want to understand.

The argument I link this to is that when you read this document on first hand, it doesn't appear as if somehow there is any offence. The offence has been established, and I read it in for the record, based on what the Speaker has said.

The problem of contempt here connects to the very way in which the government by and large relates — I'll try to use that brochure in a little while — to this assembly and to the public. If you think back on a number of other matters that have occurred in this House, you can see that this contempt of this House in this area continues in a number of other areas.

If you'll recall, on the issue of the referendum around amalgamation, where the public in Metropolitan Toronto said, "This is the only tool we've got to make this government listen to us," this government, as of a couple of days ago, refused to accept that as part of the democratic right the people had in Metro and in fact said, "They can do it but we're going to disregard it." That is seeing the same type of contempt that he has for this assembly as he has for the people in Metropolitan Toronto. So when we talk about inadvertence or technicality, there is a great deal of contemplation that is going on in the government as to how they're going to relate to the public of Ontario.

So contempt was clearly established, in my view, when they dealt with the referendum by repeatedly saying they would not pay attention to the results of that referendum. In fact, just a few days ago the Premier said that now the referendum can proceed and the vote will occur later. He continues to say that he's going to forge ahead with that bill on amalgamation and didn't say whether or not he would disregard the results of the referendum. I still am inclined to believe that he may not pay attention to the results of that referendum.

That is why the people of Ontario and Metro in particular have to continue to show force against the autocracy and the dictatorial approach this government has to them. They have to continue to show themselves in great numbers at those Monday night meetings, because I'm not convinced that the Premier is listening and I'm not convinced that if the results of the referendum lead in the direction that this government doesn't want them to, they might listen.

We need to continue to show force and show growing democracy in this province and show through that growing democracy that what you say about amalgamation and about the dumping of those new services on to



the property tax owner is profoundly unfair to Metro and to the property tax owner that is now going to have to bear a great deal of responsibility for things the provincial government should be doing. So they need to continue to participate in this growing democracy, because I have observed this government on many occasions and I have observed that they do not listen.

Just to establish another example around the rent control hearings, we had the tenant protection package. We went around the province and toured with it for four weeks, and they were supposed to listen to what the public said. Seventy per cent of the deputants were totally against what they had to say, and they came back to the committee and the committee refused to deal with the evidence before them. They refused to deal with them.

**Mr Bradley:** What pamphlet are you talking about? I haven't seen it. Hold it up.

**Mr Marchese:** I'll tell you in a second.

They refused to deal with what people had to say: 70% of the people said no to the elimination of rent control. They came back with a bill that spoke in the same manner, with the same complete disregard of people's views, the new Tenant Protection Act.

You're getting a very good sense of the type of attitude this government has. The kind of contempt that has been established around this pamphlet is connected, I argue, to many other things this government has done.

Bill 26 was another act of contempt. There were a number of areas in that bill that gave dictatorial powers to ministers, in complete disregard of the democratic process in this assembly and the democratic process that would allow the public to participate in discussions on policy matters which now ministers controlled. That was Bill 26. The tenant protection package was the same: complete disregard for what people had to say and the complete disregard of the referendum in this matter.

We are establishing, in my view, a connective in the way this government behaves with this assembly and with the public. When this government argues that it is a mere matter of inadvertence, the public will know that this is not a matter of complete inadvertence but that it is contemplated and premeditated and that they have a very good sense of what they're doing.

Although this is a case that connects very clearly to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, of which I'm the critic, it connects most definitely to the government in the way they all behave. It isn't simply one minister behaving in this manner; it is the whole government approach to all issues we have thus far dealt with. The approach is no different. We are seeing that in every aspect of every proposal, every bill, every process we have dealt with we meet with arrogance, we meet with a dictatorial approach to the way they deal with communities and we meet with a complete disregard of people's views.

I want to touch on some of the matters the Speaker touched on to show how he builds up to why contempt has been established. He says, "In my opinion, they" — those quotations I had read that new city wards will be created etc — "convey the impression that the passage of the requisite legislation was not necessary or was a foregone conclusion...."

We agree with that. That's why we brought it up in the first place. We knew that the bill had yet to be debated

on second reading, that they had yet to give the public an opportunity to speak, that they had yet to give the opposition parties an opportunity to speak and that they had yet to give an opportunity to their own members to speak on this bill, if they have the courage to speak on this bill. I hope many will have the courage to do so. It makes it appear that this bill is "a foregone conclusion," meaning the public has no role to influence this government — not just this assembly, which represents a significant proportion of the electorate, but that the public has no way of changing the direction of this government. It is the complete disregard of that process that is contemptible.

I suspect that the people who are watching and beginning to understand what we're actually debating will, after understanding it, realize that this is exactly the case, that the public has been held in contempt — not just me as a politician representing an electorate, one riding out of so many in Ontario, but that they, individually and collectively, were being told they have no power whatsoever to change the direction of the policies of this government. That, I argue, is a contemptible act. But is it a unique act? No. This is not unique in the history of this government's political experience, not unique at all. That's why I alluded to Bill 26 and I alluded to the tenant protection package, which will hurt tenants, when most oppose it, and they come back again presenting the same package, through an act, to this House. It's not inadvertence whatsoever.

1550

The Speaker continued and said, "I would not have come to this view had these claims or proposals...been qualified by a statement that they would only become law if and when the Legislature gave its stamp of approval to them." He's correct, because we want to be able to have that opportunity and so do your members want to be able to have an opportunity to speak to the bill. I'm still optimistic and hopeful that some of your members will in fact speak to this bill, because I can tell you, in a number of meetings that I have been at just recently — a couple of days ago at Loretto high school 500 people were there, crying for a role, crying for a way and a means to participate, crying to be heard; wanting the member of Parliament of that riding to be there, but she did not come; wanting direct accountability of their members, and she did not come.

I expect more. I expect a government to be able to stand up and defend its policies, no matter what. I do not expect government members to hide away. I don't expect them not to have the courage to defend their policies. But over and over again where I go to meetings, I find that members of the government do not have the courage to come and defend their policies, however wrong they might be — or however right, according to them. If they believe they're right, come and defend them.

The Speaker continues. He makes a number of good points when he refers to Speaker Fraser, saying this is a parliamentary democracy, and I agree. But with this pamphlet, this very pamphlet, the Speaker has said this government has crossed the line, and they did. There is a threshold of what is publicly acceptable, and they have crossed the line. They crossed the line in terms of what they stated by pretending this is a foregone conclusion,



and they crossed the line as well where they have used public dollars to direct a political position, and that is the government's position. As they know, most of what we produce here should be in the nature that it informs the public, but not in ways that it leans in favour of a government to put forth its position, not giving the public an opportunity to give its other view and not giving this assembly the opportunity to have its view. That's what we are crying for in this place. That's why the protests around this are so strong.

I suspect there are a lot of other people out there in the public who are not readers of the biggest dailies and they don't follow television too often, so some of them probably wonder: "What is this about? Why is the feeling of the opposition so strong around this, and why did the Speaker make such a ruling?"

The people who come here on a regular basis, who are sitting here above me, they care, and they are very concerned, because this government is about to trample on their rights. This government, in Metro, is about to trample on their rights. They are being amalgamated without having a say, literally. Up until a few days ago, they would have been amalgamated without a say, until the Premier said the referendum will be permitted to continue.

But these people who are in this assembly care very much about the way this government is behaving and the way it is ruling, and that is why they're here. Normally you won't see a gallery filled with people. Normally people of course carry on with their business. They may or may not disagree with what a government is doing, but you will not see them in great numbers up here in this gallery. The reason you see them coming daily is because they're very concerned about whether or not they will have a say, and whether or not democracy in this province still works, and whether or not their participation will be heard, and whether or not their participation can influence the government if they strongly disagree with what you have to say.

We, through this debate that we're having, are giving the people of Ontario an opportunity to understand why this debate is happening, that it isn't a very simple thing that they simply sneak away under that carpet. You can't simply do that. This is a serious matter and it goes to the heart of our democracy and the way this province should run.

I am genuinely hopeful that what we're seeing in Ontario through this growing democracy is a movement where people are actually beginning to participate in what concerns them and in what they care about. I am optimistic and hopeful that people for the first time will start being involved in the political process of this province, because they are beginning, in my view, to understand that what happens in this place affects their lives directly, and not just in their pocketbooks but in how things are organized in a way that affects a *modus vivendi*, a way of living. That's what we're seeing here in Toronto in particular. We're seeing it in Metro. They're concerned by the way their life is being disordered by the actions of this government.

So I praise this government for having given us the opportunity and given many in Ontario the opportunity to

have a reason to be involved. You have done for us more than you can imagine. You, through the policies that are so disagreeable, have given people in Ontario and Metropolitan Toronto in particular a cause. It's a cause célèbre, Monsieur Villeneuve, and I'm right behind it, and I'm not the only one. As you see it weekly, there is a movement that's growing. People are attending those weekly meetings, and it is beautiful to see it grow because it gives me hope that we will be able to stop this government from imposing its treachery on the people of Ontario.

What they are doing through the imposition of these policies, through the imposition of these processes that are completely undemocratic, is that this public, the people of Ontario and Metro, are going to hold you accountable, and I'm looking forward to that day. Many people here in this province are looking forward to that day.

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** Mr Speaker, I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to rise to speak on this resolution being put forward by the member for Oakwood. I think this resolution very much arises from your ruling yesterday. It's very important, in my judgement, to look at the basis for the ruling, the content for that ruling, to be able to look at the motivation behind the drafting of the motion brought forward by my colleague the member for Oakwood.

The ruling has been characterized as a final verdict, as a sentence, if you wish, Mr Speaker. In reading the ruling — I think it is very important to quote your ruling, as have other members — you have ruled that, "I find that a *prima facie* case of contempt has been established."

"*Prima facie*," in my definition, Mr Speaker, is at first glance, that the motivation behind this motion has been that at first glance our Speaker has deemed that there is a finding of a contempt, that this issue should be discussed and debated in this House. In fact, sir, you invited the honourable member for Oakwood to rise and speak and present a motion immediately, it being so important to stop debate on all other issues while this case was dealt with.

1600

You did not, in my judgement, sentence the government or impose a verdict beyond allowing the member for Oakwood to present his motion. That's very important. I think the one very important piece of information that has been neglected in discussions by my colleagues the members opposite is that following this ruling, which was limited to the pamphlet, you ruled:

"With respect to the television commercial and the ministry press release mentioned by the member for Algoma, I am of the view that they do not raise a *prima facie* case of contempt. On the contrary, the commercial does nothing more than explain in a simple and general way the government's philosophy and its broad reform agenda."

So there are two cases here. The motion, though, does refer to the advertising campaign, which I as a member on this side of the House believe could leave the impression with the general public that the scope of your ruling was far greater than it in fact was.

Not to underestimate the content of the ruling, which I have great respect for, Mr Speaker, the Minister of



Municipal Affairs and Housing, to his great credit, the moment the Speaker took his place after delivering this ruling, stood in his place wanting to immediately seek the floor to address this very important issue we faced yesterday. The minister immediately stood and unfortunately, due to the procedures in this place, could not have the opportunity to speak, but when my government House leader did get the floor some time later and spoke for some 15 minutes, he asked for unanimous consent. To the credit of all members opposite, they allowed him the opportunity to get up and speak. To his credit, Mr Speaker, he not only said that he accepted your ruling, he not only stated that he respected your ruling, he apologized to this House.

I think that's very important because I recall that yesterday, during the debate and the discussions, the member for Algoma, for example, spoke and said, "Why doesn't the minister get up and apologize?" Well, he stood up in his place immediately and it was his intention to do so, because he respects Parliament and he respects your judgement and your ruling. That's very important to put on the record, because it has on occasion been forgotten during this debate.

The motion under debate presented by the member for Oakwood in my judgement makes a presumption far beyond the ruling, a presumption that this government will never support, and it causes me great concern. The member for Oakwood moved, in my judgement, three separate and very unique things in one motion. The first thing he proposed was to censure the government, solely on the basis that the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, elected by all three parties in this place, ruled that at first glance a case existed with respect to contempt of Parliament and to parliamentary privilege, when the Speaker ruled that at first glance there was a clear case that this issue — to say that the government be censured when at first glance there is just a case does in my judgement extend it too far.

To the credit of the minister, though, he immediately stood up and acknowledged that there should have been a disclaimer, that the pamphlet should have said "would" rather than perhaps the word "will," which you said, sir, in your ruling. That's something that I think is very, very important.

The Speaker was asked and ruled on a number of points, which led to this motion. You ruled on, I believe, two or three separate points of personal privilege and found that it was at first glance only applicable in one of those three or four points of privilege that were brought. That's also very important to note.

The motion says explicitly that the government was contemptible in its advertising campaign, in my judgement attempting to cast a far wider net than the ruling that you gave in this House, sir, permitted, which I think is very important. That causes me concern as a member being asked to debate this motion, which I think goes well beyond the decision that you ably made to the Legislative Assembly yesterday.

It inferred things that you explicitly, in my judgement, sir, said were not. I think it's important to put on the record your ruling:

"With respect to the television commercial and the ministry press release mentioned by the member for Algoma, I am of the view that they do not raise a *prima facie* case of contempt. On the contrary, the commercial does nothing more than explain in a simple and general way the government's philosophy and its broad reform agenda."

Something that I guess, sir, you were acknowledging is very important, that the government do communicate with the public, with the taxpayers that they are elected to represent. That's the second concern I would have with the member for Oakwood's motion that we are currently debating.

The third point I see contained in the motion is referring the matter to the Legislative Assembly committee. This was certainly an option. We certainly believe that a suitable and appropriate discussion should arise on this issue. This issue is obviously one that has been a problem for various governments at various different levels, and as some of the members opposite have indicated, on a non-partisan level governments have on occasion gone into various situations where it is perhaps grey. The world isn't always black and white as some would like to think. Governments do have a very difficult time establishing a protocol.

I could say very categorically that a suitable and appropriate examination should be given to this because when you look at the precedents and rulings from various parts of Canada, in various legislative assemblies, in the National Assembly, in the Houses across the country, this is obviously an issue that has been a challenge for various levels of government.

I suppose if you had said, "We're going to put forward proposals and not allow the public to know about it," it would make it easier. It would always be easier for the government to do nothing. It would always be easier for the government to simply not attempt to inform the general public who sent us here. It is important, though, that the government attempt to put forward the information to the public so that they are in a position to make their own judgements with respect to the pros or cons of the particular issue being discussed in public policy circles. That's very important. I do have the concern, though, with respect to the broad range, the broad nature of the motion being put forward by the member for Oakwood in this motion.

I think it is important in these discussions to look at how other governments at various opportunities have dealt with this issue. It is important, in my judgement, to look at the number of points of privilege that were brought forward that led to your ruling.

On January 14 the member for Algoma raised a point of privilege regarding a 30-second Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing television advertisement released on January 13, 1997, in which the Premier talks about services and local government. The member asked the Speaker "to admonish the government to withdraw the ad and to ensure that this kind of thing never happens again."

On January 15 the members for Oakwood and Algoma raised points of privilege relating to a Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing pamphlet being distributed to



households within the Metropolitan Toronto area relating to government legislation affecting governance in Metropolitan Toronto. The member for Algoma asked the Speaker to rule whether the pamphlet was in contempt of the Legislature. Matters were also raised around the expense of communications, and you, Mr Speaker, of course, recognize that the government's use of funds outside of the Legislative Assembly is not within the jurisdiction of the Speaker. That is important to put on the record.

There are a number of previous instances where this issue has been grappled with by governments at various levels. References have been made by members who made points of privilege in this place last week, two examples of situations relating to government communications products, one in the federal Parliament on a 1989 advertisement and one here in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in 1994 relating to a newspaper advertisement appearing in the Ottawa-Carleton area concerning Bill 77, which again, remarkably, was on an issue of local governance and the makeup of governance in my part of the province in Ottawa-Carleton. In both cases it was said there was not a *prima facie* case for contempt. There have been many cases of government communications relating to a bill currently in debate that have not constituted contempt.

It is obviously, as you can see, Mr Speaker, a very difficult balancing act for the government, which your ruling will certainly provide great assistance for. Your ruling will provide great assistance for parliaments right across the globe on this issue. As the member for St Catharines indicated yesterday, a landmark ruling indeed.

1610

As you can no doubt appreciate, governments have a responsibility to communicate with their electorate and are too often criticized that they do not. We have been inundated with requests from citizens for information about various government proposals. Last week in this place a whole series of big initiatives were announced. Many were concerned, and they wanted more information on them. I know, as a member of provincial Parliament, like many of my colleagues, I have received a good number of requests from folks in our constituencies asking to learn more.

One of the important things I've said to my constituents is that, while these proposals were studied and drafted in 1996, while they were introduced as proposals in this Legislative Assembly in 1997, the intent of the government was to see them implemented in 1998 and perhaps not even fully transferred on the ground through 1999, so it was actually a much longer process. It often is very difficult for members of the general public to get specific and meaningful information on a whole host of government announcements and government proposals at one opportunity, so on occasion I get calls from my constituents asking me to provide them with information. That's certainly done regularly by most members and indeed most governments around the province.

As a government, we've got to feel it's important to respond to that need, to that request for factual information, from which the individual taxpayer, citizen, voter

and resident can make their own judgement on what they choose to believe.

I could look at the past actions of governments with respect to the motion put forward by the member for Oakwood, with respect to how they chose to communicate various decisions. I look at advertising —

**Mr Bradley:** What about all those blatant partisan ads?

**Mr Baird:** The member for St Catharines talks about blatant partisan ads. I couldn't agree with him more. I saw a blatant partisan ad on June 19, 1993, in the Saturday Star. The member for St Catharines mentions blatant partisan ads. I've certainly got a good example here. This is a case where the previous government, the members opposite, put a message from the Premier of Ontario in the Saturday Star. It's directly related to government communications is of course the reason, for the member for Oakwood.

**Mr Bradley:** Weren't you going to be different?

**Mr Baird:** The member for St Catharines says, "Weren't you going to be different?" Certainly I would argue that we are different, that the issue of contempt and censure of Parliament contained in the resolution from the member for Oakwood says — these are my notes — that the advertisement contained in the Saturday Star went in a far more explicit way with respect to Parliament. If I could quote from it to the House, "It's for this reason that we brought in a law that tries to get the social contract negotiations started again" — "that we brought in a law." On June 19, there had been no law brought in. There was no law, and there was no bill before this place for discussion.

**Interjection:** Who signed that?

**Mr Baird:** Who signed that? Bob Rae. I believe we're in a very rare instance where we can look at virtually every member of the New Democratic Party opposite who was sitting in that cabinet. When they talk about a motion for censuring the government, as contained in the resolution, they should certainly agree.

But when censuring the government, why would you censure the government when the government wasn't censured for the social contract law? They used the word "law." "Law" means it's been introduced in the first reading, it's been completed through second reading —

**The Speaker:** It's difficult, I know, to try and stay close to the topic on such an important issue, but I think it's important that you stay around the topic.

**Mr Baird:** I appreciate your guidance, Mr Speaker, as I always do. I have a great deal of respect for the Speaker's ruling. But for censure to be brought forward, as is dictated in the motion we're currently debating from the member for Oakwood, when we used the word "law" in previous examples, it does give one pause, when using directly the word, and the terminology goes far beyond that contained in the brochure in question, the brochure my colleague the member for Fort York so ably held up.

The issue with respect to the 30-second television commercials made no reference to legislation, nor does it make any reference to the timing of change, yet it's lumped in with this ad. Yet the member for Oakwood chose to use the words "advertising campaign," which, in my judgement as a member of the Legislative Assembly,



clearly leaves the impression that it's part of the ruling of the Speaker, which in my judgement, clearly looking at your ruling, Mr Speaker, it of course is not. It makes no reference to legislation, nor does it make reference to timing.

This issue has been dealt with, as I mentioned, by various other levels of government, relating to the motion from the member for Oakwood. In dealing with the motion in question, I think it's very important to look at appropriate cases where governments have advertised where there was not a *prima facie* case for contempt.

In December 1989, the opposition House leader of the National Assembly questioned the content of brochures published by la Commission de la santé de sécurité au travail. The brochure contained information on a new rate system which was to come into force on January 1, 1990. The opposition asserted that rights of members were being ignored. In this motion to provide contempt of the government, of course it was no relation to that issue.

The pamphlet in question produced by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, which was, I guess, part of an advertising campaign, was distributed to those household which were directly affected by the proposed changes. The pamphlet, as I have already outlined, is quite factual and was intended for information purposes. Clearly the Speaker has ruled that intent and consequence are obviously different things, and that's something all members of the House have great respect for. The ruling introduced by the Speaker in the Legislative Assembly yesterday does provide guidance for governments right across the Commonwealth.

There have been a number of other cases in various parts of the province where this issue has arisen. The advertisement in discussion was sent just to homes within the Metropolitan Toronto area, and that's important to note too.

It is very important, in my judgement, to say that the pamphlet should have contained a disclaimer, and to the credit of the minister, he immediately made that pronouncement following the ruling of the Speaker. Perhaps the word "would" should have been used rather than "will" and that would have been more clear.

But I think with every single issue we must look at motive. What was the intention behind the advertising campaign that the member for Oakwood has talked about in his resolution? What was the motive, what was the intention? The intention and the motive guiding the government in that instance was to provide information. There were a good number of questions and concerns being related to members from Metropolitan Toronto asking for information and this was a very cost-effective way to disseminate information.

The pamphlet was produced and it was distributed in Metropolitan Toronto after first reading, something that was not done when the previous government brought in the social contract and took out advertisements advertising their plan to override collective agreements and talked about a law which was not even a bill at that point. For those not familiar with the legislative process, you have a proposal, then you have a bill and then you have a law. Certainly in other circumstances people get far ahead of themselves and call something a law before

it's even a bill. For those students of the parliamentary process, it's very important to note that.

I think it's important to keep that in mind, that the scope of the resolution brought forward by the member for Oakwood goes well beyond the ruling that was made by the Speaker with respect to this issue and in my judgement simply does not merit support because it tries to do three things, which in my judgement all go too far. The motion requests the censure of the government where only a case has been made that it is totally obvious on the surface that there is a case of contempt. It attempts to render a verdict rather than to see charges laid, which in my judgement is important to note. The intention of the motion is as well to lump in the whole advertising campaign, something that was explicitly ruled by the Speaker was not a problem.

So I find those reasons give me problems as a member of the Legislative Assembly to —

**Mr Bradley:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm going to correct my own record here because my record is my recollection and that is, I just heard the member say that the Speaker ruled that the advertising campaign of the government was okay.

**The Speaker:** Member for St Catharines, your record can't be your recollection. That's not possible, but I appreciate the attempt. The member for Nepean.

**Mr Baird:** So for those reasons that I've outlined in my remarks, I can't support the motion presented by the member for Oakwood.

We've had significant debate on this issue. We have been discussing it for some time. We have spent two full days discussing it to this point — no statements by members — so pursuant to standing order 47, after 21 members have spoken, I ask that this question be now put.

**The Speaker:** I'm going to take a 10-minute recess to review the information.

*The House recessed from 1620 to 1630.*

**The Speaker:** Mr Baird has moved that the question be now put.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members; it will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1631 to 1702.*

**The Speaker:** Mr Baird has moved that the question now be put.

Will those in favour please rise one at a time.

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Grimmett, Bill	Pettit, Trevor
Baird, John R.	Guzzo, Garry J.	Preston, Peter
Barrett, Toby	Hardeman, Ernie	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Bassett, Isabel	Hodgson, Chris	Sampson, Rob
Brown, Jim	Johnson, Bert	Saunderson, William
Carr, Gary	Johnson, David	Shea, Derwyn
Chudleigh, Ted	Johnson, Ron	Skarica, Toni
Clement, Tony	Kells, Morley	Smith, Bruce
Danford, Harry	Klees, Frank	Snobelen, John
DeFaria, Carl	Leach, Al	Stewart, R. Gary
Doyle, Ed	Leadston, Gary L.	Tascona, Joseph N.
Ecker, Janet	Marland, Margaret	Tilson, David
Elliott, Brenda	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tsubouchi, David H.



Fisher, Barbara	Maves, Bart	Turnbull, David
Flaherty, Jim	Munro, Julia	Villeneuve, Noble
Ford, Douglas B.	Mushinski, Marilyn	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Fox, Gary	Newman, Dan	Witmer, Elizabeth
Froese, Tom	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Wood, Bob
Galt, Doug	Palladini, Al	Young, Terence H.
Gilchrist, Steve	Parker, John L.	

DeFaria, Carl	Klees, Frank	Tascona, Joseph N.
Doyle, Ed	Leadston, Gary L.	Tilson, David
Ecker, Janet	Marland, Margaret	Tsubouchi, David H.
Elliott, Brenda	Martiniuk, Gerry	Turnbull, David
Fisher, Barbara	Maves, Bart	Villeneuve, Noble
Flaherty, Jim	Munro, Julia	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Ford, Douglas B.	Mushinski, Marilyn	Witmer, Elizabeth
Fox, Gary	Newman, Dan	Wood, Bob
Froese, Tom	O'Toole, John	Young, Terence H.
Galt, Doug	Ouellette, Jerry J.	
Gilchrist, Steve	Parker, John L.	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed, please rise one by one and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Boyd, Marion	Gerretsen, John	Miclash, Frank
Bradley, James J.	Kennedy, Gerard	Morin, Gilles E.
Christopherson, David	Kormos, Peter	Phillips, Gerry
Churley, Marilyn	Kwinter, Monte	Pouliot, Gilles
Colle, Mike	Lankin, Frances	Pupatello, Sandra
Conway, Sean G.	Marchese, Rosario	Sergio, Mario
Cordiano, Joseph	Martel, Shelley	Silipo, Tony
Crozier, Bruce	Martin, Tony	Wildman, Bud
Curling, Alvin	McGuinty, Dalton	
Duncan, Dwight	McLeod, Lyn	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 25, the nays are 58.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion not passed — failed.

**Ms Lankin:** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: If I could have a page, I would like to send these documents up to you. As you receive these four pages, you will see that the first page is an Internet address. The short form of it — I won't go through the whole thing — is [Toronto.mmah.gov.on.ca](http://Toronto.mmah.gov.on.ca). On the next page, which is a directory page, at the top of it you will see that the header has the graphics, which is "One Toronto for All of Us," the CN Tower and the "Toronto" the same as on the pamphlet that has been the subject of debate in the House for the last couple of days. You'll see on that directory a number of things listed: news release, background information, speeches, the act. Specifically, each of these documents is individually accessible to members of the public.

I've pulled off just one example for you, that being the document which is headlined on the directory page entitled "Life in a Unified City." "Background Information," it is called. If you take a look through it, Mr Speaker — and I won't take a lot of your time because I know that you will probably want to reserve and read this thoroughly — for example, "What is happening to local government in Metro Toronto?" One sentence there: "All of these governments are being merged into one government."

"Why is this happening?" The last sentence: "There will not be vehicles from three different local governments in the park cutting grass or clearing trails. Instead there will be one city providing services as efficiently as possible."

"When will the merger happen? The new city government will begin to operate on January 1, 1998."

I want to make it very clear to you how seriously I take the ruling that you've made and the unprecedented nature of that ruling, and I don't in any way mean, by bringing forward another example soon on the heels of that, to lessen the importance or to appear to want to abuse the ruling that you have made.

It is my belief that having found a prima facie case that the Minister and Ministry of Municipal Affairs are in contempt of the Legislature for a document which set out and which would leave the impression with members of the public that in fact a law had been passed or actions were being taken, that it wasn't subject to parliamentary democracy, the ministry should have taken at least some minimal remedial steps to ensure that all of its publica-

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 59, the nays are 28.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Mr Colle has moved that the government be censured by the House for its contemptible advertising campaign and that the matter be sent to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly for its consideration.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members; there will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1705 to 1735.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour please rise one at a time to be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Bartolucci, Rick	Duncan, Dwight	McLeod, Lyn
Boyd, Marion	Gerretsen, John	Phillips, Gerry
Bradley, James J.	Kennedy, Gerard	Pouliot, Gilles
Christopherson, David	Kwinter, Monte	Pupatello, Sandra
Churley, Marilyn	Lankin, Frances	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	Marchese, Rosario	Silipo, Tony
Conway, Sean G.	Martel, Shelley	Wildman, Bud
Cordiano, Joseph	Martin, Tony	
Crozier, Bruce	McGuinty, Dalton	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed please rise.

#### Nays

Arnott, Ted	Grimmett, Bill	Pettit, Trevor
Baird, John R.	Guzzo, Garry J.	Preston, Peter
Barrett, Toby	Hardeman, Ernie	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Bassett, Isabel	Hastings, John	Sampson, Rob
Brown, Jim	Hodgson, Chris	Saunderson, William
Carr, Gary	Johnson, Bert	Shea, Derwyn
Chudleigh, Ted	Johnson, David	Skarica, Toni
Clement, Tony	Johnson, Ron	Smith, Bruce
Danford, Harry	Kells, Morley	Snobelen, John

tions and documentation and communications with the public were at least appropriately qualified, if not withdrawn.

I pulled these documents off the Internet this afternoon. This remains. There's been an opportunity for the government, had it taken the case seriously, to have taken steps. It appears to me the evidence, in conjunction with the vote we just saw, is that the government hasn't taken your ruling seriously. In that light I bring it forward and I would ask that you take a look at that and rule to the House.

**The Speaker:** Do you want to speak to this?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** I gather the member for Beaches-Woodbine is asking you to take into consideration other pieces of material, other pieces of literature that may have been associated with the same general package that you made the ruling on —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Wildman:** No, this is on today.

**The Speaker:** Opposition members, I appreciate the input, but I want to hear from the government House leader, please.

**Hon David Johnson:** We certainly respect the ruling which you have made. While the ruling pertained to one particular pamphlet, I guess in general you made it clear in your remarks that there was a broad advertising campaign, or something of that nature. I forget exactly how you worded it.

In terms of the government's communications, there has been a communications package put in place, obviously, to communicate with the people of Ontario. My suspicion, without seeing precisely what the member has, is that it is part of that package which had been designed and put in place some time ago and part of the same package that the communication with regard to the city of Toronto has come out of.

Obviously the government has heeded your words and will certainly be addressing its communications package and looking to ensure that it complies with the suggestions and the guidelines that come out of your decision. I think you would realize, Mr Speaker, that over the course of the last day or so the government had limited ability to do that.

Indeed, if in this House we were to raise all examples of former communications packages, whether they be within the last weeks or months or whether they be over the last years, one could raise the communication from the former government in 1993 with regard to the social —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Government House leader, I appreciate your input to the point where we started moving towards previous administrations etc. I take your point of order very seriously and I will deal with it when I report back. I will reserve to analyse the situation. If you'd like to continue, you're more than welcome to, but that tack I don't think would be helpful at this time.

**Hon David Johnson:** Mr Speaker, I'm not sure precisely what tack. As I understand it, the member for Beaches-Woodbine is asking for another ruling on other material which has been designed in the past —

**Mr Wildman:** No, today.

**Hon David Johnson:** But designed and constructed in the past. The government has not had the chance to react.

What I'm saying is if we are to deal with the past and motions that stem from the past, then there certainly clearly is a communication in the past from the former government which clearly breaches the guidelines you have laid out, not to mention from the member herself with regard to communications for her own riding, which is the subject of —

**The Speaker:** I appreciate it. I will take this opportunity — point of privilege?

**Ms Lankin:** Sorry, Mr Speaker, not to prolong it, but two short additional pieces of information. I want to make it very clear that this is a current package that was taken off the Internet today, and while the minister has said that the government has not had time to deal with this, I would point out that the pamphlet, One Toronto for All of Us, which is the subject of your ruling, was on the Internet and was removed by the ministry. I am pointing to other documents that have not been and simply point out to you that on the directory page this information is not subject to any qualifier or other document you have to go through first; it is directly accessible as an individual, standalone document.

**The Speaker:** I'll simply take that and reserve and report back at a later date.

**Mr Turnbull:** Mr Speaker, not relating to the previous point of order directly, but a related point of order: In my comments earlier today I mentioned the fact that the NDP put out literature with the NDP stylized trillium logo on it; in fact it's on their letterhead. After that presentation, the member for Beaches-Woodbine came over to me and said, "It's allowed to have the trillium or the provincial logo on letterhead."

Over the years I have always understood the provincial logo to be very clear as to what it was and in fact the trillium had a particular typeface to be used. However, leading up to the last election — and this is a very important point that I'm making, Mr Speaker, so I hope you will pay very careful attention to this — approximately a year and a half, I'm sure you will remember, before the last election, the Premier of the day took to wearing a very, very large — excuse me, Mr Speaker, I haven't —

**The Speaker:** Order. To the chief government whip, I appreciate the point you're making, but let's be clear. There is a process in place to deal with that issue. That process is through the Board of Internal Economy. That may be referred there at any time and dealt with by an all-party board. I would encourage you to refer that matter to the Board of Internal Economy, which it should properly be before, and not really take up the time of the House. It's not truly before us; it should be before the Board of Internal Economy. I thank you for your input.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Last night I attended a massive public rally to save Hotel Dieu



Hospital in St Catharines from closing because of the drastic funding cuts being imposed by the Conservative government of Mike Harris.

The largest crowd I have ever witnessed at Club Roma heard a panel of extremely knowledgeable individuals from the field of health care denounce the recommendations of the Niagara hospital restructuring committee that, faced with a proposed \$44-million cut in provincial government funding for Niagara hospitals, has recommended the elimination of an essential health care facility that has served St Catharines and the Niagara Peninsula residents so well for so many years.

The proponents of this kind of crackpot realism that compels local authorities to accept the closing of needed health care institutions was not accepted by the panel of medical experts assembled at the town hall meeting or by the hundreds of concerned citizens who braved winter weather to express their opposition to the hospital closing policy of the Harris government in general and the ill-advised recommendation in particular.

I expressed my continued support for the Hotel Dieu Hospital, which has an important oncology and kidney dialysis unit. I do not intend to roll over and play dead, nor does anyone at that meeting intend to roll over and play dead, while the Harris government, which is spending millions of dollars of taxpayers' money on self-serving, partisan ads, closes our local hospital.

1750

#### MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY STAFF

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** There appears to be no end to which the Harris Tories won't go so they can give a tax break to their rich friends. Just last week the government's second minister against the environment announced the latest round of sackings in the ministry: another 303 jobs sacrificed on the altar of the Common Sense Revolution.

Should this be cause for concern or should Ontarians relax, secure in the knowledge that they're just trimming the fat? That depends on whether one considers programs monitoring water quality, for instance, or those that combat acid rain, as frills. MOEE staff have been cut to the extent that these invaluable programs are virtually at a standstill.

In Mike Harris's Ontario, it would seem that issues such as the quality of the air we breathe and the water we drink are but trifling concerns. Why else would he allow the number of air monitoring staff to fall to a little over half the number of just five years ago? To Mike Harris, it would seem clean air is one of those luxury items we can do without.

We know that the overuse of pesticides causes a number of environmental and human health concerns: cancer, immune and reproductive system damage and the like. But yes, let's stick our heads in the sand and cut the field pesticide staff by 40%, because after all, if there's no one there to say we have a problem, there's no problem. Right, Mr Premier?

#### COMPUTER TRAINING

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth):** I stand in the House today to announce yet another example of how the people of Perth are working together to improve the province of Ontario.

Instructors Peter McAsh and Jim Sheldon have developed what has been characterized as a ground-breaking private-public partnership which will provide the students at St Marys DCVI with training which was unavailable, and to some unimaginable. The students are to be offered an opportunity to gain practical experience in Web page design, coding, business, sales and community relations. The proposal is to have students develop Web sites for local businesses participating in the program. Local businesses will in turn buy those services in order to finance the project. In effect, businesses will receive Web page design, maintenance and regular updates. The availability of the server service was arranged with the assistance of Chris Warus, a newswire account executive and a native of Perth.

The benefit to the community as a whole is that the Web site will provide a presence for the town of St Marys. The goals of the project, which began in the fall of 1996, were to provide Internet access for the school and a presence on the Internet for St Marys. Included in the project is a business guide, and in the future it is hoped that sites will be provided for the friendship centre, the museum and other non-profit organizations. I commend the students at St Marys DCVI for their foresight.

#### GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville):** Last week the Minister of Environment announced the virtual shutdown of Windsor's environment ministry. Today we read in the newspaper about further hospital layoffs. We've seen \$1.4 billion cut from health care, we've seen more than a \$1 billion cut from education, yet this government persists in spending public money to advertise its political agenda.

This government refuses to honour the Speaker's ruling about contempt and votes down a resolution that would have censured its own members. This government doesn't understand the pain that it's inflicted on the people of this province. The members opposite will rant and rave and say they're all right, but the people of Ontario are reading your number, and your numbers are going down.

In about two years' time the chickens will come home to roost and every one of you in Metro Toronto is going to be in very deep trouble, because thousands of people are standing up for home communities. Thousands of people are standing up for small government. Thousands of people are standing up for responsible property tax management in this province. The people of Ontario understand that your agenda is about raising taxes for the poor, raising taxes for middle class people, putting a greater burden of public expense on property taxpayers, particularly senior citizens, and all the while you use their hard-earned tax dollars to advertise your failing agenda —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.



## CHILD POVERTY

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** Last year at Convocation Hall Sister Helen Prejean, the nun whose life was immortalized in the movie *Dead Man Walking*, said that in the face of great wrong, in the face of great evil, if you do the right thing, however small the step or incremental, eventually providence will kick in.

This week in this place the chickens have come home to roost for this government. Mr Speaker, with the help of yourself, they were found guilty of contempt of the Legislature, guilty of contempt of democracy. The program that they have in mind for this province is in line with what was introduced in the jurisdictions of the US and the UK and there, according to the National Centre for Children and Poverty, the child poverty rate is 25.5% in the United States and 19.3% in the United Kingdom.

Canada is not far behind. We stand right now at a child poverty rate of 14.3%. If this government continues down the road that it is on now, more children and more families will be in poverty and communities will be destroyed.

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for Foodphone affairs):** Tony, \$11-billion deficit.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Minister of Agriculture, thank you.

## PARKWOOD ESTATE AND GARDENS

**Mr Jim Flaherty (Durham Centre):** It is with great pleasure that I rise to address the House regarding Parkwood estate and gardens, situated in the heart of the city of Oshawa in my riding of Durham Centre. A national historic site, Parkwood was built in 1917 as the home of Colonel and Mrs R.S. McLaughlin, the founder of McLaughlin Motor Works, which became General Motors of Canada.

Parkwood is a national, provincial and civic treasure, being a rare and complete example of a large estate of the era between the First and Second World Wars. The residence is intact, with the grounds being largely the same as they were originally.

Just recently, Parkwood was featured on A&E's *America's Castles* and has also been a setting for a large number of films. Parkwood attracts tens of thousands of visitors each year for its art, architecture, antiques and also for tea in the spectacular gardens. Many civic and private events are hosted in this atmosphere of a bygone era.

Parkwood is a valuable part of Oshawa's community and maintains a link with Oshawa's roots. Parkwood provides a rare insight into the history of the city of Oshawa and the province of Ontario. I invite all members and everyone in Ontario to visit the gardens and the estate of Parkwood in my riding of Durham Centre, adjacent to the riding of Jerry Ouellette, the honourable member for Oshawa, and John O'Toole, the honourable member for Durham East.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** How's the dumping in Oshawa?

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. It was a park he was speaking about.

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North):** It's a great park.

**The Speaker:** I'm sure it is a great park.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I wanted to comment on the concerns of Scarborough about the plans for amalgamation. I think, firstly, the House should recognize that about six weeks before the provincial election, Mike Harris had a Mike Harris task force. It was chaired by someone called Joyce Trimmer, the former mayor of Scarborough, and co-chaired by Al Leach.

The recommendation couldn't have been clearer to Scarborough: "We are going to keep Scarborough. We're going to get rid of Metro. We believe in keeping Scarborough." So the residents of Scarborough all felt they had been told not to worry. Al Leach himself said, "We're going to get rid of Metro and we're going to keep Toronto, Scarborough, Etobicoke," and many of you got elected on that basis. So what do we find? Suddenly Al Leach decides he's going to get rid of it.

But now we've seen the first crack, because fortunately Marilyn Mushinski has jumped off the bandwagon. I have a letter here addressed to Frank Faubert dated January 14: "I am pleased to invite your municipality to bid to host the 1998 Ontario Summer Games." Marilyn Mushinski knows there will be a Scarborough. She has abandoned Al Leach. She is now inviting Scarborough to host the games. We are making progress.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I want to comment on the Premier's remark that critics of the massive downloading that's taking place are nothing but whiners. The fact of the matter is that local politicians are speaking out for communities like mine in Hamilton-Wentworth that are being devastated by the changes you're making. We're talking about \$121 million being downloaded above and beyond what you call a wash. That is translating into an 18% increase in property tax.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Christopherson:** You may want to heckle and think that it's not important, but what it means to my constituents and those of Hamilton-Wentworth is a \$425-a-year increase over and above what they're already paying because of what you're downloading into my community. For instance, public health: You're putting added responsibility to the tune of \$21 million. In public housing it's \$58 million. In social services it's \$183 million.

This government claims there will be a 10% decrease for property taxpayers. Well, there sure as hell won't be in Hamilton-Wentworth. There are the figures, and they can back them up with documentation.

They've asked you to take this back. Take it back and consider what you're doing to communities like mine. You're destroying them and you've no right to.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned till 1:30 of the clock on Monday.

*The House adjourned at 1802.*



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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 27 January 1997

Lundi 27 janvier 1997



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 27 January 1997

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 27 janvier 1997

*The House met at 1331.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### JASPER MINER

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** I rise today to pay tribute to a very special constituent of mine, Jasper Miner, who passed away last week at the age of 86. Mr Miner, the last son of world-renowned naturalist Jack Miner, continued his father's conservation work at the Jack Miner Bird Sanctuary in Kingsville well into his 80s.

Jasper Miner was a man who truly held his father's love and appreciation of nature. For the countless visitors who made their way to Kingsville, Jasper Miner was the public face of the bird sanctuary, entertaining all by driving his all-terrain vehicle among the geese, prompting them into flight for what became known as the sanctuary air show.

His dedication to conservation and his devotion to public education at the sanctuary were instrumental in keeping the work of his father alive for future generations to enjoy. Jasper took special pride in the banding of hundreds of birds each year in order to further our knowledge and appreciation of wildlife, and wild geese in particular.

A deeply religious man, Jasper Miner held deep respect for his fellow persons and all things under the sky. He will truly be missed, not only by the people of Essex South but all those who share a love and respect for nature and are dedicated to its preservation.

### SOCIAL SERVICES

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** East End Network is a network of community agencies in the east end of Toronto that are involved in linking residents to community and social services that are so needed. They have been dealing with the impact of the government's cuts, particularly to social welfare spending, and what it means in families' lives as they see the demand on their organizations or agencies and their services increase.

They decided they needed to do something to allow people to express their point of view and they started a card campaign, "East Toronto Speaks Out Against the Provincial Cuts." Almost 1,000 people filled out these cards, which I'm going to send over to the Premier for his information: 87% of the people who filled out the cards said they'd had cuts to their income; 84% said there was more hunger and hardship in their families; 76% said people were spending less in their families; 86% said

they had seen more people borrowing or begging for money; 79% believe there is more crime or violence as a result of it. It goes on to deal with issues like hopelessness and fewer jobs and more evictions and more homelessness.

Some of the individual comments written on the cards were very instructive, like: "a hopeless future to look forward to"; "children feeling helpless and dealing with more worries"; "cuts to school programs and welfare affecting independent and homeless youth."

This is a litany of community opinion. It is an important opinion to listen to. I hope the Premier will take the time to review it.

### CHRYSLER CANADA

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North):** It gives me great pleasure today to recognize the outstanding accomplishments of my riding's biggest employer, Chrysler Canada.

This past Friday morning I was fortunate enough to be in attendance when Chrysler rolled off the one millionth LH sedan at our flagship Bramalea assembly plant located in my home riding. Chrysler's Bramalea assembly plant has been producing top-quality Canadian automobiles since 1987. Its current product line includes the Chrysler LHS, Concord, Intrepid and Vision.

Operating in a just-in-time environment, the workers and management of Chrysler produce 1,072 cars per day — that's 68 units per hour — a great accomplishment by any standard.

These accomplishments are outstanding not simply because of the numbers but because behind the numbers is a great story. They are rated the number one North American plant within Chrysler, voted the best plant among the Big Three by the well-respected Harbour and Associates report, and awarded the "Best car built in Canada" award three years in a row by the Automobile Journalists Association of Canada.

The commitment and hard work of Chrysler Canada and its union people is a demonstration of the confidence in Ontario. I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating the management and staff of Chrysler's Bramalea assembly plant and the rolling off of the millionth LH sedan. Maybe there be a million more.

### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** We see by the headlines this weekend that health care is once again in the news, news created by this government, how Ajax and Pickering General hospital has notified of 201 layoffs, how health and social service workers are taking



the brunt of the job cuts in the health system, and how doctors are now warning patients not to go to hospitals alone without their families because of the nature of the cutbacks. The health care crisis in this province has reached a dangerous state where physicians have had to actually start warning patients with that kind of advice.

In Ontario, where once our health care system was the envy of countries around the world, we now have the laying off of hundreds of nurses because this government's plans to gut health care are now putting patient care in jeopardy. An entire floor of Mount Sinai Hospital just down the street is being closed, with the layoff of 94 registered nurses and 50 beds being shut down. That's in addition to 69 nurses at Oshawa General, 88 at Ajax and Pickering General, 387 at Toronto Hospital and so on and so on, and yet this government refuses to take responsibility. This doesn't even mention the hundreds of nurses who are being laid off in communities affected by the government's hospital destruction commission.

There is no point talking any more about our having the best health care system. It's rapidly being dismembered. Why are people speaking out now? Because they no longer have any confidence that this government has a plan. The Ontario Nurses' Association, the Ontario Hospital Association and the College of Family Physicians all say they don't believe integrated health care can be brought, because this government does not have a plan for making that system happen. What we have instead is a sad state of affairs with our hospital system falling apart.

#### PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** On Thursday of last week a demonstration was held outside this Legislature. This is not a rare event these days with this government in power. The people protesting are employees of this government. They work in the print shops and mail rooms of government ministries.

Fifteen ministries want to privatize their print shops and mail rooms for the sake of privatization. More than 120 employees are affected, many of whom have worked for 10 to 15 years at the lowest-paid jobs and a significant number of whom have some disabilities. These people will have an extremely difficult time exercising bumping rights, or even finding another job. If employees stay with the new employer, they face wage cuts, loss of benefits and pension rights.

If the government really wanted to save money, they should ask the people who do the jobs now where savings can be found. The government could look at reorganizing existing services to provide better service more cost-effectively. None of this occurred. Was there a cost analysis comparing reorganizing existing services with privatization? The union has asked this question and the government has yet to respond.

This government is on a privatization bent like we have never seen in Ontario. They believe that the private sector can do things cheaper and better than the public sector. The changes occurring in the Ontario public service are a direct result of this government's pro-privatization stance. We have the first minister of privatization in

Ontario. They want to privatize Hydro, TVO, the Ontario Clean Water Agency and the LCBO, but the majority of Ontarians don't want their public services in private hands.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North):** I was pleased to have the Minister of Health, the Honourable David Johnson, visiting my riding and the long-term-care facility at Georgetown District and Memorial Hospital last Friday. The minister, however, was there for more than just a visit. He announced the government's investment of \$1.95 million in capital funding to increase long-term-care services for area residents in Georgetown and Halton region.

This long-awaited announcement is welcome news. My community has been chronically underserved in this area, having the lowest number of long-term-care beds per 1,000 of population over the age of 75 in Ontario. This is good news for all area seniors who, when in need, have a local option to remain in their community, close to their family and friends.

This announcement reaffirms our government's health care commitment to all Ontarians to spend future health dollars where they are most needed.

Renovations to the Bennett Health Care Centre will provide 57 new beds. The total cost of the project will amount to \$3.9 million, half of which will be covered by the hospital.

I want to conclude in paying tribute to the hard work and dedication of the present and past hospital boards and the many volunteers who have devoted a countless number of hours in raising funds for the community project. I salute these groups for their efforts and the community spirit in making such a worthwhile project a reality. It shows once again why Ontario is a great place to live, why Ontario is a great place to work and raise a family, especially in Halton North.

1340

#### RAMADAN

**Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview):** As the end of Ramadan approaches, I rise to comment on the significance of this happy occasion for Ontario's Muslim community, a significant community in our multicultural society.

Ramadan is the ninth and holiest month of the Muslim year, which follows the lunar calendar. It marks the period during which the holy book, the Koran, was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, peace be to him. He in turn urged followers to learn it by heart and obey its commands.

It is a time of abstinence. This peaceful act of denying oneself gives Muslims a realization and an appreciation for poverty and hunger and allows them to overcome selfishness. In doing so, they feel closer to God, to each other and to all fellow citizens.

Fasting is one of Islam's five pillars of faith. As such, it is respected as being the fundamental or cardinal worshipping principle of Islam.



As Ramadan ends, Ontario's Muslims will join with over one billion Muslims worldwide and celebrate the thanksgiving festival of Eid-UI-Fitr. The celebration can include a morning service, a charitable donation and visits to friends and relatives.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our Muslim brothers and sisters who are observing the holy month of Ramadan the very best and happy Eid Mubarak in advance on behalf of our entire Liberal caucus.

#### NORTHERN ONTARIO

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** I direct my statement today to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines on no strategy or plan for the north.

In a press conference you gave last week in Sault Ste Marie you announced that a specific northern investment strategy has been developed to respond to the higher service delivery costs in the north. You said, "The strategy surpasses the former northern support grant ratios and will ensure that northern Ontario gets its fair share of support when the changes in municipal-provincial relationships start taking effect in 1998."

The so-called northern strategy is part of a province-wide reserve and not specific to northern Ontario. When a reporter at the press conference suggested it was not a northern strategy at all, you responded, "That's right." You then added that an eventual northern strategy will be worked out and that you assume it will happen.

I'm greatly disturbed by your remarks. First of all you make this phoney announcement about helping northerners. Northerners don't buy it, Minister, and you owe an apology to northerners for pretending that your government has developed a strategy to respond to their specific needs when it obviously hasn't. Second, as the Minister of Northern Development, you are the one responsible for developing a strategy for northern Ontario and you're supposed to stand up for northerners.

It's quite clear that you're not doing your job. We can't live on assumptions. We demand real action and we want it before this whole disentanglement mess takes place.

#### EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre):** This government's Who Does What initiatives are about removing \$5.4 billion from the property tax bill, or 60% of the total. In exchange, we are moving services that should have been delivered locally all along on to the property tax. The result will be an end to waste, overlap and duplication and it will create improved accountability for the property taxpayers of this province.

But don't just take my word for it. John Ibbitson of the London Free Press writes:

"In many ways, the changes simply bring Ontario into line with the rest of Canada.... For years, Ontario governments struggled to reform the province's education system. Powerful school boards repeatedly raised teacher salaries and property taxes faster than the cost of living. Meanwhile, student test scores lagged behind British Columbia's and Alberta's. Education Minister John Sno-

belen rushed in where other education ministers had feared to tread."

In addition to being out of touch with fiscal reality, as they have been for the last 10 years, the opposition parties are out of touch with what taxpayers and parents want for their children when it comes to education. They should stop blindly defending vested special interests and start acting responsibly on behalf of the taxpayers of Ontario.

#### SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** On Thursday, January 23, 1997, the member for Beaches-Woodbine (Ms Lankin) brought to my attention some material that she had downloaded from the Internet. The material dealt with the same subject matter that I had previously had brought to my attention by the member for Oakwood (Mr Colle). My ruling of Wednesday, January 22, dealt quite specifically with this particular issue. Subsequent to that ruling, the minister rose in his place, apologized and indicated that it was an inadvertent error. He did in fact apologize to the House.

Following Ms Lankin's point, the government House leader said that the government respects the ruling given and will be reviewing its communications packages to ensure that in future they all comply with the new ruling. I would expect also that each and every ministry will have read the ruling and understood the ruling so they will in fact comply for future communications packages as well. I accept the word of the government House leader in this regard and I am confident that the ministries will take note of this ruling.

I say to the member for Beaches-Woodbine that I am of the view that a reasonable amount of time must be allowed for that review to take place. It seems reasonable on all sides of the House that the government be given some window of opportunity in which to adjust its plans and make the necessary changes. Although I appreciate the fact that you brought this point of order forward, I think it's incumbent on myself and the rest of this Legislature to allow the government an opportunity to conform with that particular order, and I would expect it will.

It makes no sense, further, to go back retroactively and have me review previous advertising campaigns during previous time. From this point forward, the government will be expected to follow the ruling that was made. I think they have given us their undertaking, and as honourable members I think we should give them the opportunity to put that house in order.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: As you know, I gave notice on Thursday of my intention to bring forward a point of personal privilege and that I would hold it until today, respecting the fact that you did not want to consider new points of privilege while we were in the middle of a debate of censure.

The point of privilege I wish to raise follows very directly from the ruling you gave last week that says government actions that imply legislation has passed or will most certainly pass regardless of the outcome of any debate or vote taken in the Legislature constitute, in



effect, contempt of the legislative process and of the Legislature.

You'll be well aware, Mr Speaker, that on Thursday morning last week the Minister of Education indicated his intention to name two co-chairs to the Education Improvement Commission. He also named the two specific individuals who would be appointed as co-chairs. That Education Improvement Commission is not yet established in law, because the law that would establish it is only in second reading. Furthermore, the commission itself is to implement the legislation that is currently before the House and has only had second reading and has not yet gone out for public hearings.

I believe that the actions of the minister, in announcing at this point not only that he intends to appoint two co-chairs but who the co-chairs will be, are very clearly, following your ruling, contempt of the legislative process, show a disregard for legislative debate or for at least the possibility that that piece of legislation may not pass through this House. They certainly show a complete disregard for the public input that is to be received during public hearings, which the government has indicated it intends to hold.

I would say further that given the fact that the Thursday morning the announcement was made — and I respect your ruling just offered that there needs to be some time line for the government to be able to incorporate the significance of a ruling — was the day after a ruling had just been made that the government had been in contempt of the Legislature, the Minister of Education taking immediate action in order to put in place a process that was not yet established in a law on a piece of legislation being debated in the House either was very much in-your-face not only contempt of the Legislature but disregard for the ruling of the Speaker that week, or else it was very clear evidence that the government simply doesn't get the significance of your ruling. I'd ask you to consider this further as contempt of the Legislature.

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** On a point of privilege related directly to this, Mr Speaker: In addition to what my colleague has brought to your attention, there have been orders in council signed by the Premier and the names of these two appointees to the Education Improvement Commission have been sent to the members of the government agencies committee. You well know, sir, that they then can be called before that committee and we could find ourselves in the ludicrous position where we have to call these individuals if we so choose before the committee, review their appointments and, as has been pointed out, the legislation for which they're being appointed hasn't even passed second reading.

I would ask, Speaker, that you take these appointments of order in council and their possible appearance before the government agencies committee under consideration as well.

1350

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, your ruling last week I think was fairly clear in terms of the communications and the marketing, that the advertising the government does relevant to various programs should not presuppose that

the final debate has been held and the final vote has been held.

Nevertheless, in terms of the planning of various issues I think you, Mr Speaker, and members of this House would agree that a government does have to do certain background planning. Now that doesn't presuppose any particular debate in this House, any particular vote in this House; it's simply part of the ongoing planning process. But clearly the government, as you indicated earlier and as I indicated in my comments last week, will be reviewing all of its advertising in light of your ruling. At the same time, there needs to be work behind the scenes to ensure that proper planning and proper processing take place, and I think that's the light that this should be considered in. It's certainly not any violation of the ruling you made last week, which the government fully intends to comply with.

**The Speaker:** If I could ask the member for Essex South, I'm having difficulty understanding your point of privilege, if you could quickly state it again.

**Mr Crozier:** Certainly, Speaker. The point of privilege is that the names of the appointees to the Education Improvement Commission have already been signed — the orders in council have been signed by the Premier. The time in which they could be called to appear before the government agencies committee could expire before the legislation that would enable them to be appointed is even passed. In other words, I suggest that the legislative process has not yet been followed and that it simply could be a done deal before the legislation is even passed. It's premature.

**The Speaker:** I appreciate the points of order brought forward by the members for Fort William and Essex South. I will take those in consideration and report back at the earliest time.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Premier. It has now been a couple of weeks since the mega-week announcements and the smoke has cleared and it is perfectly clear to all objective observers in this matter that the net impact is going to be a property tax increase to be shared collectively by property taxpayers throughout the province in excess of \$1 billion.

The list of those opposing your scheme, as you well know, Premier, is growing every day. Those opponents could hardly be categorized as being nay-saying leftists. Listen to some of those who oppose it: The Board of Trade of Metropolitan Toronto, Moody's bond rating agency, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation and, of late, 24 of the 25 GTA mayors. Everybody knows that dumping the costs of welfare and seniors' long-term health care will cause property taxes to skyrocket. Premier, you've had time to reconsider. You now better understand the arguments against this. Will you now reconsider and go back to the drawing board?



**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I think a lot of people are concerned when there are changes being made. You have used the very incorrect figure of \$1 billion, which would be about 8% of the taxes collected now by municipalities. We think your \$1 billion is all wet, that when you look at the year 2000, of \$6.2 billion in education, we believe that municipalities will find their costs will, if not stay the same, go down and that there will be savings there for them to go down.

Nobody knows for sure how much they'll be able to cut taxes. It obviously depends on various municipalities across the province. What we have heard is a number concerned about whether there's an uneven impact of the changes —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Harris:** — and we're certainly willing to sit down. We have a year to work this out with our partners and I'm quite confident we'll be able to do that.

**Mr McGuinty:** Premier, you've got to admit that there is virtually universal condemnation for what you're doing. You can't ignore the fact that municipalities right across the province are starting to calculate now and come up with their own numbers. You would not or could not produce the numbers, so municipalities have taken it upon themselves to come up with numbers.

Kingston has determined that additional costs to it will be in the neighbourhood of \$23 million; Brantford, \$18.5 million; Niagara, \$43 million; Sudbury, \$105 million; and in Ottawa they're looking at \$500 in new property taxes per household.

You can't just dump costs on property taxes so you can cut income taxes. Not only is it intellectually dishonest, it's unfair to our seniors and our poor. I want to ask you again: Are you going to back down? Would you reconsider? Would you forget your plan to dump more than \$1 billion on to property taxpayers and go back to the drawing board?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Let me just set the record straight on a few things. We don't plan to dump any costs over and above the tax capacity that's there for municipalities. As I have said —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Frank Mclash (Kenora):** There is only one taxpayer.

**The Speaker:** Order. Member for Kenora, come to order.

**Hon Mr Harris:** — that is there, along with the education coming off the property tax, somewhere in the order of — I have the figure here — \$11.5 billion. What we are working towards is having that \$11.5 billion that is now being collected in property taxes and available exclusively for municipalities — our goal is to make sure that when we finish the transfers we have, we do not increase that capacity. What we believe is that by sorting out and with the efficiencies that are there, that will allow municipalities to reduce that \$11.5-billion —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr McGuinty:** Premier, you don't have to believe what I'm saying, but of the dozen or so municipalities that have crunched the numbers, not a single one has been able to determine there are going to be fewer costs. In fact they've all come up with additional costs. The

Toronto board of trade calculates from the business perspective that small businesses in Metro are going to have to pay as much as \$7,900 more each year in property tax. Brantford Mayor Chris Friel said you were "insulting the intelligence of every taxpayer in the province" when you talk about property tax decreases.

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If you won't listen to me and you won't listen to the business community, listen to your backbenchers. The members from Hamilton, when they saw the numbers in Hamilton-Wentworth, said —

*Interjections.*

**Mr McGuinty:** Well, ask them how they feel about the \$121-million increase in new property taxes the people in Hamilton-Wentworth are going to have to withstand this coming year. Tell me how increasing property taxes is consistent with the Common Sense Revolution. Tell me how adding \$1 billion to property taxes is common sense.

**Hon Mr Harris:** It is not consistent with the Common Sense Revolution and that is why it will not happen. What is consistent with this government is lower taxes: lower property taxes, lower income taxes, lower payroll taxes. The only thing that higher property taxes is consistent with is the record of the Liberal government from 1985 to 1990, when 231 municipalities had mill rate increases of 40% or more: Lakefield 82%, Port Hope 69%, Oshawa 67%, Temagami 61%, Whitby 57%, and so on and so on. That's the only consistent record of massive property tax hikes; that was from the Liberal government. Under our government we would expect property taxes to go down.

#### SOCIAL, COMMUNITY HEALTH AND HOUSING SERVICES

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):**

My second question is also for the Premier. What you're doing, and I'm sure you understand this, is moving essential services, through which we care for our most vulnerable, back on to the property taxpayer. This is something that we have taken decades to move away from. You're turning over the care for our chronically ill seniors to our municipalities. You are telling our smallest towns that they are responsible for ensuring poor children get the food and clothing and shelter they need. Why are you going against the recommendations of every expert who has ever addressed this subject? Why are you dumping responsibility for the poor and seniors' health care on municipalities?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** We are asking, in exchange for \$6.2 billion of tax relief on education, for our municipal partners to share in the delivery and costs of human services, those services to help people who need help. They already are involved in a number of those areas, as you very well know, and I think Mr Crombie recommended that they be even more involved. Mr Crombie talked about some funding, about who would pay for things.

There are two things here: There is who does what, and we believe and agree with Crombie that closest to the people you will find the best compassionate decisions



made for people; and who funds what, which is a different issue. We think 50-50 is a very fair way to do that. I can tell you that under our proposals we'll have better services, helping more people, without the massive property tax increases we had when you were in power.

**Mr McGuinty:** So we're very, very clear on this, Crombie, handpicked by you, an expert on this matter, who spent considerable time studying it, recommended against this. He said you don't transfer welfare and long-term care into property taxes. That's your own expert.

Let's talk about the numbers for a minute. By your own admission, there is \$1 billion in new costs being dumped on the property taxpayers, but you're only providing \$300 million to cover those new costs, and that's because you've killed a \$700-million fund. When it nets out, the \$300 million is all that's available to cover the new costs. That's a difference of \$700 million. When you add the Crombie numbers, that's when you come up with a total net cost, factoring in all of your rainy day funds, of a billion new tax dollars to be added to property taxes throughout the province. Municipalities are going to be able to do a lot of things under this new regime, but one thing they're not going to be able to do is print money. Given that you're shortchanging municipalities by more than \$1 billion, how can you possibly expect them to provide these essential services?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Mr Crombie recommended that municipalities deliver welfare, closest to the people making those decisions.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Premier.

**Hon Mr Harris:** Mr Crombie recommended that municipalities deliver welfare services. He felt that was the government closest to the people, that they would know the files better, that they could deliver the services most efficiently. Given the \$6.2 billion in tax capacity, because we will now fund 100% of education off the residential property tax, what we have determined is that we should fund it 50-50, that we should be partners in making decisions and in developing the programs, and in addition to that, the province would pick up any significant upside liability with a special fund.

Of course what happened under the Liberals, because they would not be so generous with municipalities, is property taxes went up 160% in Mattawan township, 39% —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Thank you. I think it's probably safe to give the entire Liberal caucus a warning at this point in time rather than picking and choosing. I'd ask you to come to order. It's difficult to hear the answers and it's better —

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** We get a different answer every day, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** With the greatest respect, I'm not going to have a debate and it's really out of order to heckle the Speaker. That really sets it down right there. Final supplementary.

**Mr McGuinty:** Again for the record, David Crombie begged you, he pleaded with you not to download social services on to municipalities because he fully understood

both the economic and social implications of so doing. You obviously do not. Let's recap.

You tried to fool the people into thinking that this was going to be a wash for municipalities. That has proved to be untrue. You tried to tell us property taxes were going to go down by 10%. That clearly is not the case. You said there was a new \$1-billion fund, but when you subtract the old \$700-million fund it turns out that your \$1-billion fund is in fact only \$300 million. You said there was a rainy-day fund for welfare, but we now find out municipalities are going to have to pay for it.

Premier, nothing your government has told us in the last two weeks has turned out to be true. I'm going to ask you again: Will you forget this madness? Will you go back to the drawing board — take all the time you need; this is very important stuff we're talking about —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, leader. Premier.

**Hon Mr Harris:** Quite frankly, I want to say directly to the leader of the Liberal Party and to all who are watching that it is your complete lack of understanding of the numbers that led to the \$10-billion, \$11-billion deficit in this province, that led to massive property tax increases, that led to income tax increases, corporate tax increases.

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** That is a distortion of reality. That is a lie.

**Hon Mr Harris:** Listen, we are prepared to be judged by the numbers. What we are doing by the year 2000 will lead to the kind of capacity that we believe property taxes can be reduced, in some cases up to 10%, which is totally contrary to all the misinformation that you are talking about across this province.

**The Speaker:** I'd ask the member for Scarborough-Agincourt to withdraw that comment that he put on the record.

**Mr Phillips:** In deference to you, Mr Speaker, I withdraw it.

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## MINISTRY OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is also for the Premier. It's about a memo that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs has put out to employees in that ministry, employees who staff the telephones and deal with complaints and calls that come in about your megacity proposal and your downloading.

What's amazing about this memo is that it says that staff are supposed to tick whether someone's in favour of megacity or against it and staff are supposed to tell callers that their comments are going to be passed along, meaning into the minister's office, but then further down in the memo it says: "Do not fill out any call forms. Do not document any comments. Do not pass on any concerns or criticisms you hear. Do not forward any comments. Never promise a call back." Don't you think it's a bit dishonest of your government to be telling people who are concerned about these issues that their comments are going to be passed on and then you —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.



**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I'm sure the minister has a perfectly logical explanation for what you speak about.

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** It's only common sense, which is probably why the member across doesn't understand it. Certainly we want to get information from callers. Yes, we ask them if they have any comments on the amalgamation of the city of Toronto and I want that information passed back to me. It's important that we know what people think, and because the members opposite won't put second reading through so that we can get to debate and have public hearings on this issue, we're relying a lot on phone calls directly to us from the general public.

**Mr Hampton:** The Premier obviously doesn't appreciate the importance of this and the minister just contradicted his own memo. I'll read the memo for you again. It says, "The minister's office has been swamped." This memo tells your staff who are answering the phones, "When somebody calls up, tell them that their comments are going to be passed on, tell them that their comments and concerns are important," but then later on in the memo it says, "Don't fill out any comment forms, don't pass on any comments, don't pass anything on, don't tell them they'll get a call back."

Minister, you were cited for contempt in this House last week. Now we've got a memo from your ministry that is being completely dishonest with citizens. It's telling them that their concerns are important and then it says later on, "Don't pass on any comments." Who's right, you or your memo?

**The Speaker:** Leader of the official opposition, I appreciate the fact that you're talking about a memo being completely dishonest, but with due respect, that directly reflects back on the minister and the ministry.

**Mr Hampton:** Speaker, maybe you could help me out here.

**The Speaker:** You can only help me at this point in time, and you can help my by withdrawing the comment about being completely dishonest.

**Mr Hampton:** Speaker, I withdraw the comment about being completely dishonest.

I want to ask the minister, who is right here, them or you?

**The Speaker:** That's fine. We're now at the minister's part.

**Hon Mr Leach:** The member is holding up a piece of paper that I personally haven't seen, but I know that the staff at the ministry have been asked to take messages on amalgamation. There is a lot of interest being shown by the people of Toronto, and as soon as we can go out to hearings and have public debate, they'll have an opportunity to come and personally ask members of this Legislature about our proposals. In the meantime, I still encourage my staff to take calls, to take messages and provide the information to my office.

**Mr Hampton:** We've shown this memo to a few people and we've asked them, "What would you conclude from this?" I know the Premier doesn't take this issue seriously, but I think you should, Minister. I really think you should in view of last week.

Are you prepared now to completely withdraw this memo? Are you prepared to admit that this is deceptive, telling people that their comments and concerns are important but then instructing staff not to pass on any comments, not to pass on any concerns, to treat the whole thing like a public relations matter? Are you prepared to say that's completely wrong and are you prepared to start listening to the people of Toronto? Are you finally prepared to start listening to them instead of trying to snow them?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I can assure the member opposite that I will continue to encourage my staff to take messages and to pass that information on, and I will also try and get the members opposite to pass second reading of this bill so that when the member says, "Give the people of Ontario and the people of the GTA and the people of Toronto an opportunity to take part in the debate, provide us with their information, provide us with their comments, tell us about their concerns," we'll be able to do it, instead of blocking it at every step, instead of interfering with the democratic process. Just get out there, put this bill through second reading so that we can get out to the people of this province.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr Hampton:** I would just say to the minister that I think this memo shows contempt for the public, but I'm not surprised at that, coming from you.

#### RED TAPE REDUCTION

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is to the Premier. Last week, while people were trying to deal with your mega-download announcements, you quietly launched another attack on the environment, on human rights, on pay equity and on workers' rights. You released this report. You call it Cutting the Red Tape, but I read through your report, and some of the things that are in it are truly disturbing.

Let's take the Human Rights Code and let's take a woman who has been the victim of sexual harassment. We know that the Ontario Human Rights Commission is swamped with complaints now, but you're planning in your so-called red tape review to make it even harder for a victim of sexual harassment to file a complaint. There will be new time lines and she will bear the onus of proof. I call that punishing the victim. Can you tell me, Premier, how making it more difficult for someone who is the victim of sexual harassment is cutting red tape?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** The minister responsible for the Human Rights Commission is not here today, but let me assure you of a couple of things. The red tape commission reviewed a number of ministries, a number of regulations, a number of procedures to see if we couldn't streamline them to make it more efficient, to make it better, particularly in this case, and easier to understand for women, for those who may be making a complaint, and these are recommendations to the ministry and to the government.

Probably that recommendation was made because the backlog and the lack of access to the Human Rights Commission under the former government was probably the biggest disgrace to human rights in this province, and



so we have looked, and we encouraged the red tape commission to look at the procedures that were there: Can we help those who have complaints? Can we help them better? Can we streamline the process to deal with this horrendous backlog, which in effect was justice denied under the NDP government. So we'll look at those —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you, Premier. Supplementary.

**Mr Hampton:** Premier, I would say to you, don't be patronizing to women and other people who have to deal with these issues. What you're doing is making it much more difficult for them to bring a complaint before the Human Rights Commission. You are making it more difficult for victims of sexual harassment and other human rights issues.

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Let's just move on to pay equity. Your report also says that you would change the regulations so workplaces where you've got 100 employees or less would not be subject to pay equity. What this means is that women who work in those businesses would in effect be pushed into wage ghettos. Can you explain to me how pushing women into wage ghettos is removing red tape, how denying fair pay to women has got anything to do with red tape? Can you explain that?

**Hon Mr Harris:** You come up with probably the silliest of accusations and ask me to explain. I can't explain how your silly mind works. I can't explain how you think that is anti-women. I can't explain any of that. Only you can explain that.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** It's tough to rule when you can't have order. To the Premier, it certainly isn't parliamentary to refer to anyone in that fashion. I ask you to withdraw.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I would certainly withdraw either "silly" or "mind" or both, whatever you say, Speaker.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Are you on a point of privilege or order, or are you just heckling at large? I'm sorry?

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: Either he withdraws or he doesn't. You use the same measure for them as you do for us.

**The Speaker:** With all due respect, the member for Sault Ste Marie, the words were there, they were withdrawn and in fact it was in order. The tenor and the tone I can't control, and you're asking me to; it's impossible. It was withdrawn as far as I'm concerned.

Supplementary.

**Mr Hampton:** I'll read the recommendation. It's not in my mind; it's recommendation 114 in a report your government has put out: "Amend relevant sections of the Pay Equity Act to exempt either small employers (fewer than 50 employees) or preferably small and medium-sized employers (fewer than 100 employees) from its application" — in other words, do away with pay equity for women where there are 100 employees or less. You're right, it's silly. It's incredibly damaging.

I want to ask you about the environment. You also say you want to relax regulations on the storage and transport of PCBs; you want to make recycling voluntary for industry; you want to reduce testing of industrial sewage

that can find its way into our drinking water. Premier, can you tell me how attacking the environment and allowing more pollution has anything to do with red tape? Can you tell us that, please?

**Hon Mr Harris:** You know, we had a red tape commission to review all the regulations, not the purpose. The purpose of the regulation is to protect the environment. When it comes to pay equity, which was part of your question, this government, upon taking office, added money to pay equity. We're paying more money now, added to it, the budget for pay equity, higher than the New Democratic Party, at the same time as we inherited an \$11-billion deficit, so we are looking: Are there ways that we can streamline the regulation on the environment so we protect the environment? We'd like our dollars to go directly to people who need help. We want to fight pollution. We want to fight those areas that are there. We just don't want to waste money on it.

**Mr Hampton:** Allow more pollution, force women into wage ghettos, deny women fair pay, that's what you're all about. Deny women fair pay, pollute the environment.

**Hon Mr Harris:** So while the member busts a gasket interjecting and screaming and yelling —

**The Speaker:** The leader of the third party, I want you to come to order, and it's a warning. You must let the answer be put. Premier.

**Hon Mr Harris:** While the member screams and yells about pay equity, if you'd like to put our record and the amount of dollars we're putting into pay equity against yours, go ahead. We're spending more on pay equity, and have increased the budget, than any government in the history of Ontario, and I think you're going to find that when it comes to protecting the environment, this government will take a back seat to nobody in the country and nobody certainly in this Legislature.

## GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** My question is for the Premier. Last week your government was found in contempt of the Legislature by the Speaker of the House for engaging in self-serving, blatantly partisan Conservative government propaganda ads. In his ruling the Speaker said, and I quote:

"I feel that it is wrong for a government to attempt to influence public opinion through advertising that is paid for with public funds — which, I might add, are not available to the opposition — instead of through debate in this House."

Despite this ruling, a series of clearly partisan propaganda ads funded by the ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Ministry of Education and paid for by taxpayers continue to appear on our TV screens. Premier, will you now do what is right: withdraw these TV ads immediately, save Ontario taxpayers the hundreds of thousands of dollars you are squandering on this propaganda and respect the ruling of the impartial Speaker of the Ontario Legislature?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** We take the Speaker's ruling very seriously. I think he ruled there was a *prima facie* case with regard to one pamphlet. I think he



also indicated he reviewed the TV ads and found them quite in order. I might add, not only are they in order, but the total government advertising bill will be less than half what it was in any year that the Liberal government was in power.

**Mr Bradley:** Premier, you and your spin doctors have tried to narrow this to one pamphlet, to one piece of propaganda, when everybody is talking about your entire propaganda ad campaign. Every time taxpayers in this province see your face on the television set in self-serving government ads, reading the propaganda on the teleprompter, they should know they are paying the shot.

The Speaker of this House has found your government in contempt of the Legislature because of a propaganda pamphlet produced and circulated by your government at a cost of approximately \$300,000 to Ontario taxpayers. Remember, you were going to be different. You're the penny-pincher. You're the Taxfighter. Will you now ask the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario to reimburse the taxpayers of this province for that \$300,000 ad put out by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and condemned by the Speaker of this House?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I would like to read into the record what Mr Speaker said. He said this: "On the contrary, the commercial" — the commercial you are referring to — "does nothing more than explain in a simple and general way the government's philosophy and its broad reform agenda." He is of the view that that is quite in order and quite legitimate.

We are very different from the Liberals. In the last year you were in power you spent \$22 million on government advertising. We will spend less than half that amount of money. And by the way, I would say we're explaining much more positive programs than you were trying to rationalize away for \$22 million.

#### SOCIAL, COMMUNITY HEALTH AND HOUSING SERVICES

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** My question is to the Premier. Almost everyone is realizing that your scheme to download services on to the property tax base is a disaster. What's startling and what's interesting is the number of voices that are coming in opposition to your scheme from good, solid Tories.

We had a slew of them last week. On Friday Gordon Chong was on Studio 2, saying that your mega-download of social services would cost Metro taxpayers \$1 billion. The day before, he joined the board of trade and the United Way in a press conference, both of those groups calling on you to drop your download, saying it will lead to big property tax hikes that would drive both businesses and homeowners away. Then on Friday even the 905 mayors — that's the home of most of your backbench members — said your mega-download is all wrong and should be abandoned.

With all these voices, particularly these Tory voices, coming to understand what is going on, have you finally understood how wrong it is to download welfare and other social services on to the property tax base?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** Let me assure you, we listen to all voices. We don't ask people when they phone or write in, "Are you Liberal, Tory, NDP or

any other?" We listen to all voices. We listen to the London Free Press: "Downloading responsibility is good for democracy. Local government is closer, more responsive to the voters." We listen to — I think York region feels it will lead to a tax cut or less costs for the region. I think I heard that on Friday.

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But what's most important is that the changes we are talking about presume a couple of things: One, the status quo is not acceptable. Clearly all the municipalities, all the parents with children in school, all the taxpayers told us that, and they told you that loud and clear in the last election: that the status quo needs to be changed and we have to find better solutions.

The second thing is that, come 1998, 1999 and 2000 as we implement these changes, we have committed to municipalities that we're prepared to work with them to ensure there is no added pressure on —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Premier, thank you. Supplementary.

**Mr Silipo:** Premier, we will see whether you listen to all voices. But knowing that you don't listen to all voices, I thought it would be useful to bring to your attention those voices that you might indeed listen to.

Nobody is talking about defending the status quo, Premier. I know that you like to keep going back on that horse because it allows you to then justify in your mind at least all of the cuts and all of the slashing that you do, which you're doing only and foremost to be able to fund the tax cut. That's the only reason you're into this game.

More and more of your political friends are realizing that's what you're doing, and they're saying, "It's wrong." We all agree that changes need to come about, but more and more of your friends are also saying that downloading social services on to the property tax base is the worst thing you could be doing.

Premier, will you come to your senses? Will you realize that is wrong and will you retreat from that stupid course of action that you embarked upon?

**The Speaker:** Order. I think what we're trying to do here is maintain a level of debate that is beneficial to this place. "Stupid course of action" I think doesn't bode well as the Premier's comments didn't bode well to your leader. I would ask the member for Dovercourt to withdraw and let us try and rise above those kinds of comments.

**Mr Silipo:** I withdraw that comment, Speaker, if you find it unparliamentary. I would just ask the Premier, will you withdraw from that ill-advised course of action?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. It is indeed that you're asking us to go back to the status quo.

**Mr Silipo:** We are not, and you know it.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I thought you would since you were the government of the status quo. That was your policy. If even you are saying that the status quo and the way you governed was terrible, fine, I accept that, and I thank you for realizing that a year and a half too late.

But what I think is important is this: We have to make some changes and what we have committed to do is to make sure that we will consult with municipalities. We'll work this out with them over the next year or two or



three. Some things will take two or three years to phase in and we're very confident that (a) the public will get better services and (b) we will lessen the burden on the property taxpayer.

I would say with respect to the income tax cut that it will be financing itself. You will see when the figures come in for the end of the year that the revenues to the government of Ontario in spite of the tax rate reductions will actually be higher, the reverse of what it was under the NDP.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Premier.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** You promised me no more heckling, member for Lake Nipigon.

New question, member for Nepean.

### CHILD POVERTY

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. One of the greatest challenges every society faces is how it can address the needs of its most vulnerable citizens. Irrespective of party or ideology, I know that every member and every citizen across Ontario would like to see us alleviate child poverty in our province.

Recently, we've heard a great deal about the federal government and the provinces meeting to discuss a national child benefit to help alleviate child poverty in Canada. Could the minister inform the House what the position of the government of Ontario is with respect to the creation of a national income support benefit for children?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** I'd like to thank the honourable member for the question. Ontario is looking forward to continuing the discussions we're having with our other provinces and Ottawa. We're meeting again tomorrow as we try and narrow down the options to actually have a child benefit in this country that might well help address the issue of poverty of children. I must say it has been a remarkably non-partisan exercise that we have been engaged in.

One of the things we are trying to ensure as we move forward with this is that it continues the incentive to make sure that families can get into the workforce, be working and not pay any penalties. The other concern, of course, is that some of the administrative options that were being looked at, because of their complexity, would actually mean we would be lowering our welfare rates in Ontario to try and match this benefit from Ottawa. I don't think that's an appropriate step for us to take. I look forward to working further with them on this. It's a very important initiative.

**Mr Baird:** Some other provinces have stated that they already have introduced a child benefit for children. Could the minister tell this House if those initiatives in other provinces have made a difference and how they compare with the province of Ontario.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Yes, some of the provinces have attempted to do a child benefit on their own. I think it's worth noting, however, for example in British Columbia,

that with some of the work they have done a sole-support mother on welfare with two children, even with their additional benefit, would still obtain more benefits here in Ontario than they would get in BC. I think also we have one of the most generous earning exemptions for those on social assistance, to encourage and keep them and get them into the workforce.

There are a number of things we have been doing: the child nutrition program, our healthy babies initiative, the money we've allocated for pre-school children with speech and language difficulties. There are a number of initiatives we have undertaken. We hope we can come to an agreement among the provinces and Ottawa that will allow us to improve and make even better the programs we want to have for children in poverty.

### PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** My question is for the Premier. Premier, Thunder Bay businesses are absolutely reeling from your double whammy. They now know that they're going to have to pay their share of a municipal property tax hike that will be a minimum of 20%. That increase could be as high as 40%, depending on how much of the municipal support grants you took away Thunder Bay is able to beg back from you. Now our businesses have realized that on top of this huge increase in property tax that will result from your government's unique version of a mega-dump, they will still be paying for education taxes. Premier, do you have any idea at all of the impact of this huge property tax increase on small businesses and on jobs?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** We expect no tax increases, unlike the 40% under your party, and therefore it will be a positive impact on jobs across the province, including Thunder Bay.

**Mrs McLeod:** I think both the Premier and the Minister of Finance should stop talking about the sheer myth of property taxes decreasing, because every community that is looking at its numbers is seeing the kind of increases in property tax that Thunder Bay is seeing. The reality in Thunder Bay is a minimum of 21% and as much as 40% if we can't get back a little bit of the support grants you've taken away. Businesses understand that is on top of their continuing to pay property taxes to support education.

The Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce understands the impact, Premier, if you don't. They have said very clearly: "The impact on local business will be severe. We are just starting to turn our community around. We do not need this additional tax."

Small business in my community means jobs. We have already been devastated by your job cuts. If small businesses in our community can't survive this property tax increase, we'll lose even more jobs. Are you so desperate for dollars to pay for your tax cut that you don't care how many jobs are lost?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I want the member, who I know cares very much about businesses and jobs in her community, to be able to go back with a great deal of confidence and tell the municipality that unlike your government nothing we are doing will put pressure on their property tax.



1440

## IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a question of the Premier. Too many questions remain about the sequence of events that led to the shooting of Dudley George at Ipperwash last September. The faxes your office published from the member for Lambton to your office give a broad outline of the government's role leading up to that tragic event. One fax that the member for Lambton sent to your office just before the shooting had attached to it a letter from a constituent who referred to natives as "hooligans" and urged the government not to back down. The quote was: "If people are hurt, so be it.... all levels of government have adopted a non-confrontational approach when faced with natives.... This must stop."

The member for Lambton said he totally agreed with that.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. To the member, I'm sorry and I appreciate it, but we all get the same amount of time for questions and I must put it.

**Mr Wildman:** Well, there is not a question I have put, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Well, then, Premier.

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I think we would all agree that the shooting in the Ipperwash incident is one that concerns us all, is something nobody is very happy about, obviously, particularly this government, acting, as all governments have, in as fair and as reasonable a way as we can in these situations.

As the member is aware, there are criminal charges that have been laid as a result of the shooting. We will await the outcome of those charges before any further action is taken. If at that particular point in time it is deemed appropriate, if there's more information we believe could particularly avoid anything like this ever happening again, then we'd be prepared to take further action at that time.

**Mr Wildman:** The member for Lambton was quoting, in agreement, the statement, "If people are hurt, so be it." Could the Premier clarify for us if anyone in the government ordered the immediate removal or arrest of the natives as a result of this advocating by the member for Lambton. Also, could the Premier please explain what the fax means when Mr Beaubien says, "I can take the heat — but will not be the fall guy." The member for Lambton has refused to explain what that means, what he was saying he would not be the fall guy for. I assume the Premier has read this fax, since it went to his office. What did the member for Lambton mean when he said he would not be the fall guy? The fall guy for what?

**Hon Mr Harris:** You have to ask Mr Beaubien that. I would assume he meant for anything that takes place there. Nobody was asking him to be the fall guy for anything. Nobody is the fall guy. Nobody gives direction to the police, certainly not I, not the Solicitor General and certainly not a member of caucus. But I can tell you this: The member for Lambton had very grave concerns about the safety of natives and non-natives within his riding during a very tense situation around the Ipperwash situation that took place a year ago September.

I think he was frustrated. He didn't want anybody, native or non-native, to be hurt. He was trying to let people in the government know of his concern. We were aware he was concerned. I was concerned. All of Ontario was concerned. Natives were concerned. But to suggest that any member of this government would ever give direction to police on how to carry out their duties is irresponsible.

## WORKPLACE FATALITIES

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour):** I am pleased to rise and respond to a question which the member for Hamilton Centre posed on Tuesday, January 21, concerning an issue relating to the Ministry of Labour investigation into two fatalities which occurred at Dofasco in Hamilton on January 17. It is my understanding that the employee co-chair of the Steel Cat Task Force Incorporated Joint Health and Safety Committee is participating in this investigation.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I appreciate the response from the minister. I would point out to the minister, however, that it's my understanding that these actions you announced today didn't take place until after I'd raised this with you in the House. I've since met with members of the Steelworkers union as well as members of the families of the workers who died there and they're not satisfied to date with the action of your ministry and they're certainly not satisfied with your refusal to acknowledge that you'll call an inquest. We need an inquest into the two deaths that tragically took place at Dofasco in Hamilton and we need you to announce that today on their behalf.

You've got a record of not caring about injured workers. You've gutted the WCB, you've eliminated the Workplace Health and Safety Agency, you've taken away rights under the Employment Standards Act and you announced the other day that you're watering down the right to refuse unsafe work. Today I understand you refused to meet with 30 injured workers who already had an appointment with you. Minister, that's your track record and that's why nobody believes you're sincere.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** It's unfortunate that you pursue that line of rhetoric. As you well know, we are trying and we are doing what no other government has done before to make the workplaces in this province among the safest in the world. We've indicated that we are setting targets. We are actually travelling to other parts of the world because other countries are recognizing that the initiatives we're going to take are going to save lives and are going to prevent injuries and illnesses —

**Mr Christopherson:** What a lot of garbage. Nobody believes you. All you've done is take away rights from workers.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Hamilton Centre, I ask you to withdraw those comments. They're certainly not parliamentary.

**Mr Christopherson:** I withdraw the comments.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I would just conclude by saying there's a very intensive and extensive investigation taking place at Dofasco, and certainly at the end of the day recommendations will be made.



## SOCIAL, COMMUNITY HEALTH AND HOUSING SERVICES

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** My question is to the Premier. Your government's dumping of responsibilities on to northern municipalities has everyone in the north in shock. Your Minister of Northern Development and Mines's announcement last week in Sault Ste Marie has done little to appease the fears that we have in the north. The more you talk today, the more we see that you really don't have any type of strategy to offset the extra costs.

Premier, will you guarantee today that Thunder Bay will get back the extra \$15.2 million this dumping is going to cost them, that the city of Sudbury will get the extra \$13.1 million it's going to cost them, that the regional municipality of Sudbury will get the extra \$105.4 million that your dumping is going to cost the region? Will you tell the House today that they will get this money back, that your mega-dumping will cost them 0% in a tax increase?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** We've been very clear that we believe that any changes — us paying for education, the municipalities paying a bigger share of welfare — will in fact have zero impact on taxes, and then we have indicated, as we work our way through that over the next year or two, that to deal with any discrepancies that may be there we've allocated \$2.5 billion.

**Mr Bartolucci:** That really doesn't appease the fears of the people in the north.

On December 19 your Minister of Northern Development and Mines and your Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing mutually agreed that it costs more money to deliver services in the north, approximately 16.2% more to provide these services. Will you tell us today, tell the people of the north, how much extra money it will cost the entire north because of this mega-dumping of responsibilities and how much extra money the entire north will receive because of this dumping? The people of the north don't want adjectives like "significant." We want to know how many real dollars it is costing the north and how many real dollars it is going to get back.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I would be happy to empower you to go back and tell them, and I will tell them directly and anybody who's watching, that we don't believe that these changes will cost one single dollar more to anybody in northern Ontario, in Toronto, in southern Ontario, in eastern Ontario or in western Ontario. We understand that some changes are taking place, and contrary to the 40% increase in property taxes when the Liberals were in power, we believe that property taxes will remain frozen in spite of inflation and perhaps decrease.

We're prepared to stand by our three- or four- or five-year record — I don't want to prejudge how long we go before an election — against your three- or four- or five-year record, apples to apples. Who downloaded on municipalities more than the Liberals? Nobody.

1450

## FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** For the Attorney General: You and your ministry keep trying to make the public believe that the problems you created by

destroying the family support plan have been resolved, and it's just not the case for hundreds of families in this province. Take my constituent Cathy Richardson, two of whose three children are supposed to receive \$400 per month. They did receive that under the support deduction order until November, when only \$76 was received by FSP. Although the payor's employer has confirmed, and the FSP office confirmed on January 3, that the full amount was deducted, was sent to FSP and was cashed by FSP, Cathy and her children have received no money. Minister, you destroyed this plan. What do you say to Cathy and her children?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I have indicated that I cannot comment on individual cases. What I can say is that I believe that the family support plan, now the Family Responsibility Office, has a much brighter future than it's ever had before in the sense that we are now automating the way cheques are delivered to people. That wasn't the case before. We're now finally going to have an office that can chase people who aren't paying their family support orders, and we can do that with some success by suspending drivers' licences, by referring matters to credit bureaus, by getting private sector collection agencies involved.

What we're trying to do is take an office that has traditionally been losing \$100 million a year and not collecting that money pursuant to orders and try to start collecting that money and getting the money to women and children. That's been a big problem with this plan since its inception, and we finally passed a bill in this Legislature that will permit us to collect the monies.

**Mrs Boyd:** The family support plan did not lose money at all. In fact, it made three times the amount of money that it cost to run that office.

You talk about automating this plan. Cathy Richardson is on a direct deposit system. That money came to the Family Responsibility Office and it has not gone to Cathy Richardson. It's gone somewhere, but it didn't go to her. You put all of your faith in this automation and it clearly isn't working. What's more, Cathy Richardson, once she contacted that office on January 3, has had a refusal consistently from that office to deal with her because they say they need 30 days to deal with her kind of situation and they won't speak to her until February 3.

It's a lot of nonsense that you've improved this plan. We bring up case after case where families do not have the money they need in order to feed themselves and clothe themselves and keep themselves in shelter, and you keep saying everything's fine. What do you say to all these people? What are you going to do about this situation?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** Nothing has ever been fine in the family support plan, now the Family Responsibility Office. When the member says that the family support plan made money, I don't think it was intended to make money. What it was intended to do was collect money for people who need it, who have orders, and the fact is that the orders haven't been complied with. Payors haven't been paying, and the reason they haven't been paying is because the plan has never had the authority to chase the people who aren't paying. Now we can suspend drivers'



licences, we can refer these things to credit bureaus, we can get third-party collection agencies to go out and collect the money —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. If you want to have a little debate, you can do so outside. The member for London Centre, you have to come to order.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** We're trying to set up a plan that will effectively collect more money and that will put money in the hands of women and children, not a plan that every year was running \$100 million behind in its collections.

## PETITIONS

### CLASS SIZE

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It's the first of many, I hope.

"Whereas the private member's bill introduced by Rick Bartolucci, MPP for the riding of Sudbury, limits the number of pupils that may be enrolled in a class in a school in Ontario; and

"Whereas this limit depends on the grade level of the class; and

"Whereas studies have concluded that there are clear benefits from smaller class sizes; and

"Whereas there is greater student involvement and interaction; and

"Whereas there is improved student performance; and

"Whereas there is the opportunity for greater individualization; and

"Whereas smaller class sizes allow for more varied and constructive education for students;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support this private member's bill as it enhances classroom education."

I affix my name to it as I agree with it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** We'll just wait for a minute. If members want to leave the House now, please do so. There are too many people standing.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I have a petition which reads:

"Stop Megacity Madness: Citizens Have Democratic Right to be Heard."

"To the Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas 'bigger government is not better' and the Mike Harris government has no right to dictate a megacity upon the citizens of Metro Toronto; and

"Whereas the megacity is being imposed on 2.3 million citizens in Metro Toronto without giving people a voice in the future of their cities and neighbourhoods; and

"Whereas a megacity could lead to mega property tax increases, mega user fees and mega cuts in services; and

"Whereas the Tories never proposed abolishing local government in favour of bigger government during the election campaign;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"To give the 2.3 million people in Metro Toronto a say in the future of their cities and stop the imposition of a megacity."

I will affix my signature to this petition.

## HANLON EXPRESSWAY

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville):** A petition to the Legislative Assembly from Ben Bennett and a group called No No in Guelph:

"We, the undersigned, urge the province to call an immediate halt to the tendering process for the proposed Hanlon Expressway/Wellington Street interchange project and instead implement modifications to the existing traffic signal system and add warning lights on the Hanlon Expressway."

1500

## PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Mike Harris government is attacking workers' compensation benefits and the rights of injured workers; and

"Whereas Tory plans include taking \$15 billion from injured workers and giving \$6 billion to employers, including the government's rich corporate friends; and

"Whereas Cam Jackson, the former Minister without Portfolio with responsibility for gutting the WCB, refused to hold public hearings, choosing to meet secretly with business and insurance industry representatives; and

"Whereas the WCB has about \$7.6 billion in assets and its unfunded liability has been steadily shrinking; and

"Whereas the Jackson report and WCB legislation are just part of a coordinated attack on occupational health and safety protections for working families in Ontario; and

"Whereas Tory plans also include abolition of the internationally respected Occupational Disease Panel; and

"Whereas the government needs to hear the message that taking money from injured workers and lowering incentives for employers to make workplaces safer is not the way to make Ontario a better place to live or work;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to hold full, province-wide public hearings on WCB reform; to listen to the voice of the people calling for improved occupational health and safety protection; and to tell the Tory government to call off its attack on the dignity and standard of living of injured workers and their families."

As I am in support of this petition, I add my name also.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** I have a petition entitled Stop Megacity Madness: Citizens Have Democratic Right to be Heard.

"To the Legislature of Ontario:



"Whereas 'bigger government is not better' and the Mike Harris government has no right to dictate a megacity upon the citizens of Metropolitan Toronto; and

"Whereas the megacity is being imposed on 2.3 million citizens in Metro Toronto without giving people a voice in the future of their cities and neighbourhoods; and

"Whereas a megacity could lead to mega property tax increases, mega user fees and mega cuts in services; and

"Whereas the Tories never promised abolishing local government in favour of bigger government during the election campaign;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"To give the 2.3 million people in Metro Toronto a say in the future of their cities and stop the imposition of a megacity."

I affix my name to this petition.

#### ONTARIO CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTE

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** This is a petition to the Legislature of Ontario.

"Whereas we, the undersigned, believe that helping reduce crime and abuse in our communities is our responsibility as employees of the Ministry of Correctional Services, as professionals in related fields and as concerned citizens;

"Closing institutions which provide specialized services to women and treatment to men does not achieve that goal;

"Physical, emotional and sexual abuse is often transmitted from one generation to the next, with tremendous cost to society;

"Treatment aimed at breaking the cycle must include the abuser so that another generation of children is not raised with the same destructive lessons;

"As Mr Ross Virgo stated, the Ontario Correctional Institute is 'a therapeutic community known around the world for their techniques';

"Research statistics support anecdotal evidence that we are effective in changing abusive behaviour;

"A therapeutic community cannot exist in a super-prison;

"Save victims and money by keeping what works open."

I have affixed my signature.

#### NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I have affixed my signature to it.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a further petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario regarding the health and safety of workers in this province.

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of workers for many years; and

"Whereas the centre and clinics have made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health and safety and the reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers; and

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that the education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

Mr Speaker, I add my name to theirs.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** The member for Oakwood.

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** Speaker, I move that we proceed to orders of the day.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Agreed? Agreed.

Orders of the day.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** "All those in favour." There was a no.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I didn't hear a word.

All those in favour of the motion proposed by the member for Oakwood that we move to orders of the day? Is it agreed?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members; a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1506 to 1536.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Mr Colle has moved that we proceed to orders of the day.

All those in favour please rise and remain standing and be recognized by the Clerk.

Those opposed?



**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 76; the nays are 0.

**The Speaker:** We now proceed to orders of the day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### CITY OF TORONTO ACT, 1996

#### LOI DE 1996 SUR LA CITÉ DE TORONTO

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 103, An Act to replace the seven existing municipal governments of Metropolitan Toronto by incorporating a new municipality to be known as the City of Toronto / Projet de loi 103, Loi visant à remplacer les sept administrations municipales existantes de la communauté urbaine de Toronto en constituant une nouvelle municipalité appelée la cité de Toronto.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The member for Oakwood has the floor.

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** If I could continue where I left off a week ago, the one thing that is quite clear in all the media hype and all the propaganda about this megacity bill which is being proposed is that it is really a Trojan horse, and I think this government has itself exposed that the megacity bill is a Trojan horse for the most dramatic dumping of provincial responsibilities on to the property taxpayers of Metropolitan Toronto and all of Ontario.

Never in the history of this province have we had a provincial government that basically is walking away from its responsibility for care for seniors, care for the elderly; now it's going to be on the property tax. Welfare, social services, even family benefits are going to be on the property taxpayers of Metro. Public transit is going to be 100% on the taxpayers of Metro. Subsidized housing, social housing, is now going to be on the property tax. That is why this government has rushed into proposing this megacity, that is why they're doing this and that is why it's a package.

Bill 103 is part of this unprecedented offloading, dumping, downloading of provincial responsibilities on to those least able to pay, that is, the property taxpayers of Metropolitan Toronto.

That is why the government wants to ram this bill through. That is why the government, as you know, even tried to pre-empt debate on this. They tried to give the impression to the people of Toronto that this bill was already law. That is why the minister was found in contempt, because he tried to give the false impression that there's no use resisting, that there's no use fighting the megacity bill because this is a decree.

Where this is more evident is not only in the propaganda campaign which is trying to say that this proposal is already law, but even look at the bill itself. It has two unprecedented sections in it which impose a trusteeship over the 2.3 million people of Toronto and also a transition team of Tory technocrats which will oversee the government. Those two unprecedented impositions of trusteeship and the transition team are done without any public input; in other words, the day the bill was introduced, on December 17, the trustees took over their roles,

just as that contemptible pamphlet went door to door almost the same day the bill was introduced and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs tried to tell people: "Don't debate this bill. Don't look for the other side of the story except the government decree as being law." That is why so many people are coming out against the megacity proposal, because in essence it is contrary to basic democratic due process.

I know this government always talks about a government that wants to hear from people and I know the members are offering referendum legislation, but listen to what the Minister of Municipal Affairs says about referendums. This was in the East York Mirror last week. It's called, "A Talk with Al Leach: Referendum Like Holding a Cuban Election."

The minister was asked, "What would it take for you to recognize the referendums?" This was the East York Mirror to the minister. You know what the minister replied? This is the minister who says he wants to hear from people. "In my view, a referendum is not democratic." That's what the minister said. He said: "It's like a Cuban election. You have one candidate to call the vote, so you have one question then you call a vote."

That is what is so upsetting to people, that even though the citizens of Metropolitan Toronto and all the six municipalities have said they want to hold the referendum, that they want to hear from people, the minister is saying the referendum is not democratic. He's saying, "We will ignore it," and his own Premier says he will ignore the referendum. That is why people are so upset. They're not upset about whether there are changes in boundaries; they're upset about their democratic rights being denied.

When a minister of a party that espouses referendums says, "In my view, a referendum is not democratic," you can see the stage they're setting. They're going to ignore, and they've said it categorically, the results of the referendum. They say: "We don't care what you say. Go ahead and do it. These are Cuban elections." That's what the minister is saying. That is at the heart of the opposition to this megacity imposition, forced amalgamation.

This is from a government that always says bigger government is bad government. This bill will introduce one of the biggest governments in Canada, the same size as Alberta, with one of the biggest bureaucracies that's going to oversee a budget of over \$7 billion. They're saying that is better government because it's bigger. That's what they're saying.

Then it talks about layers. In the GTA we're going to have three layers of government in the 905 area. They're going to have local government, regional government and then the new GTA level, three levels of government they're imposing on the 905 area.

Inside Metro there are going to be about four or five; you can't stop counting. There's going to be the megacounty, then there's going to be the GTA layer, then there are going to be appointed community councils, appointed neighbourhood councils under the control of the megacouncillors or the mega-mayor. So there's going to be more government, less accountability.

What this debate really gets to the heart of is that this government is doing this for one reason: They want to



ensure that their dumping agenda is carried out. They want to dump over \$1 billion on to the property taxpayers and they're dumping the most volatile services.

They're taking education, which is now more controllable because they've knocked off grade 13. They've knocked off junior kindergarten — the demographics show there are going to be fewer young people in that category, so they've taken that over and they're going to control it out of Minister Snobelen's office.

What are they going to give to the property taxpayers of Ontario and of Metro? They're going to give homes for the aged, long-term care, transit, child care, welfare. Some of these services have gone up 200% or 300% in cost and will continue to escalate because the population is aging.

Then it's doubly unfair to Metro because Metro has most of the social housing in the GTA. They've got the greatest number of caseloads in welfare. They've got an aging infrastructure stock of housing that needs over \$500 million in retrofits. They're dumping that on to the property taxpayer. No wonder the mayor of North York says that this megacity will bankrupt North York and its taxpayers, because never mind paying for social housing, they cannot afford to pay the millions needed to retrofit the housing this government is downloading and offloading on to the people, the taxpayers of Metropolitan Toronto.

The board of trade has unequivocally stated that this mega-dumping is going to imperil the most economically viable city in Canada. Last Thursday they had a press conference and said that the megacity and the mega-dumping will result in a \$7,900 increase per business in Metro — the board of trade. They also said "an average increase of \$350 per property tax in Metro." That's what this package of megacity and mega-dumping will result in, a property tax explosion, and if you add that to the minister's, whatever he calls it, actual value, market value, mega-value assessment system —

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** Current value.

**Mr Colle:** — current value, he's just trying to change the name, but everybody knows what it is — this new system of market value is going to impact again on hundreds of thousands of taxpayers in Metro. So you've got the double whammy of the dumping of all these services on to property tax, then a whole new property tax scheme.

The Minister of Finance and the Minister of Municipal Affairs have the numbers on each property in Metro neighbourhoods and they refuse to give out those numbers. Three impact studies show the property tax impacts in Metro, three studies that the Minister of Finance said are confidential cabinet documents.

We know what would happen if those three impact studies on the property tax increases were released. The public would see that this scheme, this megacity scheme with all the new taxes and so forth, is going to be, as the board of trade said, a fiscal disaster for Metropolitan Toronto. Even USA Today had an article last week saying:

"Isn't it ironic that just a month or two ago Toronto was proud of its new reputation as being the most livable

city in the world and all of a sudden this megacity dumping is comparing Toronto to a bombed-out city?"

1550

This is having reverberations right across North America, this mad agenda that doesn't add up, a mad agenda which is trying to do everything it can to block public input on this. That is why they don't want to listen to the referendum. That is why they try to do everything they can to just push propaganda at people, whether it's the KPMG report, which should have been written on Swiss cheese, it's got so many holes in it, or all the government ads or all the government propaganda that was done not according to proper procedures.

We know the government is trying to ram this thing through without the other side having its say. That's why the people of Metropolitan Toronto want the hearings to go out to the communities. They want them to go out to Etobicoke, North York, York, East York, Toronto, Scarborough. Let the hearings go out there, because they want to see and hear at first hand what this legislation will mean to their future community.

We can't get them to go out. They're saying, "Well, this is a central location; we have to have it here." The committee room here will only hold 50 people. I'm sure if you had a public meeting on this megacity proposal you would get hundreds and hundreds who want to be there to see and hear what the real facts are. That's why the government is afraid to take it out to the community, even though in the East York Mirror the minister was asked the question, "Is there a plan at this point to take these hearings on to the road to go to East York and Scarborough?" What did the minister say? Leach: "I'm sure we will do that. I agree to that. No problem."

We've heard him say that in the House, yet the House leader is saying, "No, we can't go out to the communities of East York and Scarborough because we've got television here." We should remind the House leader that television hookups are available in all the municipalities, in the city halls. We could easily do the television hookups and house 200, 300, 400 or 500 people who want to be there when their communities are being dismantled.

The hearings should be out in the public realm; they shouldn't just be contained here for a few hours a day, a couple of days a week. We want three, four, five weeks of hearings, every day of the week. They should be going out because the people are crying out. That's why every Monday night throughout this metropolitan area there are hundreds of people, if not thousands, trying to find out what is going on and what is going to happen to their city. Tonight again there will be another couple of thousand people at the Metropolitan United Church, and they will be there because they're very concerned about a government that's not listening, a government that won't listen to alternatives.

It's strange that this started off as a process where there were a lot of good alternatives out there, yet the minister is refusing to look at alternatives. There's one that's very clear and one that keeps coming out, and people ask, "Why won't the government look at it?" That is what Hazel McCallion is saying, it's what Greenberg is saying and it's what Anne Golden is saying, that you have to have a viable GTA government model along with



independent, balanced cities that make up the federation within the GTA, and if you have this mega-monster in the middle, it doesn't work, because you've got one big giant with all the rest, so the balance doesn't work in the GTA, you don't have the competitive, innovative, flexible cities.

Why doesn't the government look at the process and allow for the process to get it out of this swamp it's in? Use the referendum as a way of finding out what people really want. Find out whether the people of Scarborough really want to be part of the megacity or want their independence. Use the referendum as a good way of finding out what people feel. Listen to the referendum. Maybe the majority in Scarborough or the majority in Etobicoke or the majority in North York will want to go one way or another. Use that as a way of shaping the new GTA. Maybe it comes down to being only two or three or four or five cities that want to be part of the GTA; they don't want the megacity.

Use the input. Use the scholarship of the Golden people who worked on it for about a year, use Greenberg and his recommendation about a balanced GTA and use the common, hard-nosed political sense of Hazel McCallion that says the megacity is a mega-mistake, that you have to have balanced cities that work together. That is the logical, rational way out. It could be done quickly, because most of that has been researched. It's been documented.

But you know why the government won't listen to Greenberg, won't listen to Golden, won't listen to McCallion? Because their agenda is simply to mega-dump their responsibility on the taxpayers. That's what they want to do. They want to dump welfare, social housing, child care and public transit on to the property taxpayers.

Therefore a balanced GTA that works cooperatively and works into the 21st century is going to be ruined by this government. In fact, this megacity proposal is going to create such an imbalance that it's going to create a chasm between the 905 and the 416. This exercise started off as a way of correcting that, but as the board of trade said, this now has turned into an exercise where the very future viability of Metro is in peril because of the pig-headed attitude this government has towards what is better for the GTA, what is better for the province and what is better for the citizens of Metropolitan Toronto.

The solutions are staring you right in the face. The options are there. They've been quantified. They've been essentially detailed by experts, from an academic sense and also from a political sense. These experts have said: "Go ahead and create new governance models but do it right. Do it where you take into account the fact that there is an economy for the whole GTA, but don't put more roadblocks between the cooperation between the 905 and the 416." This government is doing just the opposite. In fact, it is going to aggravate the thing even more.

Look at the costs that are being downloaded on Metro. This is the peril that Metro is in. It's ironic that the minister went to the board of trade to make his announcement, proclaiming the greatness of the megacity. On Thursday the board of trade had to come back and say: "Minister, your figures don't add up; your rationale makes no sense. You're going to destroy Metro."

Do you know why they said that? Because this minister is going to dump \$290 million of general welfare on to the property taxpayers of Metro; \$350 million of family benefits costs on to the property taxpayers; \$200 million in long-term care being dumped on to the property taxpayers; \$369 million worth of housing, and that doesn't include the hundreds of millions they'll need to retrofit the housing in Metro. TTC, child care — \$51 million — hostels, ambulance service: All dumped on the property taxpayers of Metropolitan Toronto.

As you know, David Crombie in his report was unequivocal, saying, "This is the worst thing you can do"; that is, dump the most volatile of services on to the property taxpayer. As you know, the property tax is the most regressive of taxes, so what you'll do is put the most volatile services on to the property taxpayers.

This taking education off is basically letting the province off the hook, because they can just control one thing. The municipalities and the property taxpayers are going to have to find out how to control the cost of long-term care. All the professionals in this field say this is utter madness, asking municipal property taxpayers to control the cost of long-term care and to fund it.

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This is a ticking tax time bomb for Metropolitan Toronto. That's what megacity is. It's the most destructive package ever unloaded on a city in North America. This is something they wouldn't even do in New Jersey, Louisiana or Alabama. Only here in Ontario we've got this government running amok with some kind of backroom rejigging of basic, sound economics which says you can't unload soft services that are so volatile on to the property taxpayers.

This is again a situation that has made Conservatives like Joyce Trimmer, Gordon Chong, supporters of the megacity like Metro Chairman Alan Tonks say this is going to be a tax explosion for Metropolitan Toronto. The board of trade, again, I might mention how much they supported the government until they realized what the hidden agenda was behind megacity. The hidden agenda is basically to dump, offload provincial responsibilities on to the property taxpayers of Metropolitan Toronto. We've heard accounts of what it's going to be all across Ontario, not to mention what it'll be in Metro.

Let me quote again from the fact that there are so evident solutions in this process. What is most disturbing is that there's no chance to have the alternatives put on the table, just like the rent control debates, when the minister said: "I've made up my mind. We're going to do it. I'm not listening." That is why in the rent control legislation there wasn't one amendment. The same thing proposed in the white paper was put forward in the legislation. What is so frightening about this thing is that they won't listen.

As I mentioned, Ken Greenberg, an expert urban planner from the Toronto firm of Berridge Lewinberg Greenberg Dark Gabor Ltd, has been involved in municipal affairs and municipal issues for a lot of years and he gives the government some very interesting advice. I put it on the table again for some of the backbenchers to listen to. He says:



"Disentanglement and simplification yes, but not the loss of local vigilance which explains much of our livability and distinctive urban culture. The fierce determination of existing cities from amalgamation is not to be viewed cynically as a knee-jerk turf protection. They embody a complex history of fine-gain negotiations that have resulted in cities that work. The various city halls throughout the region are well-used civic places that evoke real pride in their citizenry."

I point to a city like East York that is a small city but probably one of the most efficient cities in Ontario. They have a community that is so well-knit that they help each other, they volunteer. The chairman of the East York campaign, Team East York, is the former mayor of East York, Alan Redway, and a very strong, lifelong Conservative. But Alan Redway feels so strongly about the destruction of his community that he stood up and said to his Conservative colleagues: "This is wrong. This is pigheaded. Listen to us before you proceed on this road to destruction." I know they have been categorizing people: "It's just the left saying this" or "It's just self-serving politicians." These are your own respected leaders like Alan Redway, who is saying, "Listen to the people of East York before you bulldoze into this."

I'll continue to quote from Greenberg, who I think reinforced what Alan Redway is saying. "There is an alternative model," and that's what I've been saying. "It too is conceptually simple. It acknowledges the need for two tiers of governance, one for the entire urban region known as the greater Toronto area where the big issues are played out and another made up of the constituent cities with a demonstrated ability to stay in contact with their citizens."

That is what, as I said, Greenberg is saying, Golden is saying, McCallion is saying, that there's no need to dictate the abolition by forced decree of the six cities. Let the cities and their elected officials and the taxpayers decide through the referendum. Listen to them. Some of those citizens may decide they want the megacity. That's fine, but listen to them. Don't say to them that the referendum doesn't count because they're using PIN numbers, as the Premier said, and telephones. This is part of the new legislation the Minister of Municipal Affairs is allowing to happen; it's part of the new process on referendum.

Listen to the people when they go and speak out on the future of their communities, and listen to people like Ken Greenberg. Listen to David Crombie, who said you can't unload welfare on Metro; it's going to kill it. That is what megacity will do. It will create such diverse pressures on Metro that it will have to do one of two things: dramatically cut services or dramatically increase property taxes. That's what the megacity leaves as the alternative to the people of Metropolitan Toronto, and it's totally unnecessary. The most disturbing thing about it is that there are viable solutions, there are viable ways out that talk about rational economic and political ways of doing this right. We will never have another chance at this for a long time.

People who care about their cities and their neighbourhoods are saying: "Listen to us. Listen to the experts." Even Paul Pagnuelo, the Ontario chairman of the Cana-

dian Taxpayers Federation, is saying that this is going to end up with mega-tax increases. Andy Sancton, professor of urban economics, urban politics, University of Western Ontario, who studied amalgamations in North America, said that this megacity will increase costs by 20 to 30 per cent.

Wendell Cox, who may be the most renowned Tory-type privatization, downsizing expert in this field, has said that by making a city this large, you're going to guarantee greater costs and less democracy. Wendell Cox, who is known as a person who looks at the dollars and cents, said that on two fronts he is against the megacity proposal, because it's going to increase costs and diminish local democracy and make governments less efficient, less competitive, less innovative, as Jane Jacobs has said repeatedly. She said that what you're doing by this megacity is reducing the potential for benchmarking, reducing the potential for competitiveness.

So the experts are saying it and the ordinary people on the streets of Toronto, the streets of East York, the streets of York, the streets of Scarborough, are saying, "What does this all mean to me and my neighbourhood and my property taxes?" As a result of the last two weeks, I think everybody is in a state of confusion and disbelief, because now they know that their own friends — the board of trade, Gordon Chong — have said that this doesn't add up. There is a billion-dollar gap that will mean more property taxes, will mean less accessibility.

The government thinks it will be able to get away with this because it's got the majority. They have said unequivocally: "We're going to do it. It's a fait accompli." Their advertisement says: "We've done it. We've made up our minds. We don't care what the opposition thinks. We don't care what the mayors think or the councillors think. All we care about is that we're right and we're going to barge ahead."

When they do that they're forever setting the citizens of Metro against this forced new puppet government they're going to impose. Forever people will say, "This was not right, this was not acceptable, because you did it without our concurrence." Sure, the government will think: "We have won the day. We have forced this legislation through. Aren't we great? We won."

But there are people all over Metro who are saying, "We will never forget this government for refusing to look at the viable alternatives, the alternatives that have been put forward on the table as being economically, politically viable." This government is going to risk the economic future of Metro and one of the most successful urban centres in the world. This government, it seems, does not appreciate the investment that people have made in this city, people who have stayed behind, invested in small businesses, invested in their homes, renovated, got involved in community groups, got involved in their churches and synagogues, got involved in their mosques, got involved in their community, made this community a success story to be lauded across the world, and this government says: "It's so bad. It's broken. There's an emergency. We'll get rid of it. We'll put you under trusteeship." This is what they say to the most successful, dynamic community in the world.



1610

I think it was Richard Gwyn who said in the Toronto Star this weekend, "Toronto works. Why are you risking it?" It's not as if we're talking about a city that isn't working. It's a city despite its challenges — people coming from all over the world, people coming with all kinds of different viewpoints who have been able to live next door to each other and achieve economic successes, cultural successes, educational successes — and this is being refuted by Bill 103, the megacity bill.

What's it saying to these people who have made this city safe — and sure we've got some problems — who have made this city work — and sure we've got some unemployed — who have made this city and its neighbourhoods and its other cities clean, as I've mentioned before? Is there a city the size of North York that's cleaner? Is there a community that's more cohesive than East York? Is there a city that's taken on more challenges than the city of York, with its population that has been coming from all over the world, with unemployment and so forth? They've taken on that challenge and provided quite well despite all the problems we have in Scarborough or Etobicoke. They've done very well with these challenges. The government now comes along and says: "We don't care what you did. We are going to make it to our liking."

The most basic premise of democracy is that you give the people a right to be heard. It's shameful for this government to keep on blocking and belittling the referendum process, as the minister has done, when all that people are saying is: "We want to be heard on this issue. We want a say. We want to be part of the process. We don't want to be shut down and shut up. We want to be able to have a vote and we want you to respect the vote and not to belittle our partaking in the referendum."

These are all the things people are saying. They're saying it in church basements. They're saying it in the Annex. We were at a meeting in the Annex last week with 500 people all saying one thing: "Right or wrong, we want the facts. What is the megacity going to do to our neighbourhoods, our services? What's it going to do to our property taxes?" They want to know that, and you know what the government's response is.

We must realize that fundamentally the megacity bill has to come back to what people want, respect what people want, because these are taxpayers. They've built these cities. They've built the neighbourhoods. They've made the schools work. They've made the community centres work. There are thousands of vibrant neighbourhoods, and they've worked so well because the city governments were able to pay attention to them. If four or five ratepayers go to Scarborough council, Scarborough council listens. They may not always agree with them, but they listen. If four or five citizens go to Toronto council, they get listened to. Paying attention to those small things, as Greenberg says, is what the secret of Toronto and Etobicoke and East York is all about.

It's not a perfect system. It's a system that needs some reform and some change but it doesn't need dismantling, it doesn't need destruction, because not only do you destroy Metro, you destroy the whole GTA. What this government is doing, and its plan is quite clear as of last

week, is that when it dumps all its responsibilities on the most vulnerable in Metropolitan Toronto, it creates a wider gap between the 416 and the 905. This exercise originally was about a level playing field. Now with a megacity you destroy the future.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Questions or comments.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** I'm glad to comment briefly on the presentation made today and last week by the member for Oakwood, and I'm looking forward to the opportunity I'll have to debate this bill a little bit later on.

I just want to say that I agree very much with the member for Oakwood in the stress he has put, particularly in today's part of his presentation, on the whole process of democracy and that what this government is doing in proceeding with this bill in the way they have been doing is trampling upon the very essence of democracy and the democratic process as we know it. Those are words which I certainly don't use very lightly, but they are the conclusion I come to as one who sees the way in which this government continues to behave on this issue of Bill 103, and indeed unfortunately being reflective of how they behave on a number of other important bills.

Here they are, wanting to make significant changes to the way in which the municipal government of Metropolitan Toronto, with the 2.3 million people who live in Metropolitan Toronto, is established, and yet they have, to this day, continued to say they don't believe that the people who live in this important region should be given an opportunity to express their opinions through a referendum. They believe, and the minister continues to say, that isn't important to them, that they will simply disregard those results.

They can continue to say that, but it will be another thing to actually see them continue to impose this legislation against the will of the people as expressed through a referendum. That is why I'm happy that at least to date we have had the government give in and agree to having the referendum take place prior to the legislation being imposed, because that, I think, will put the government really in a position to have to make a decision about whether they want to continue to ignore the role of the people on this issue.

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale):** It's most unfortunate to have the description of the member for Oakwood's presentation today named as a presentation. I think it's more of a rant than it is a presentation. For example, let's take a couple of minor considerations in this whole thing of the obsessive rhetoric with terms like "destruction," "the loss of democracy," "higher taxation."

Let's take a look at the existing status quo: We have in Metropolitan Toronto, in terms of taxation, a highly inequitable, unfair taxpaying situation. The member for Oakwood talks about an attack upon the vulnerable. Well, I would comment to him that the status quo, which he so readily embraces and vigorously defends, in essence is actually an attack on the vulnerable taxpayer in Metropolitan Toronto.

I don't know if the member has travelled around Metro; I hope he would have. If his eyes were open he would see that in the present situation, in terms of



property assessment in all the six cities, we have been ravaged by the recessions of the past few years. We have a whole litany of empty buildings, whether they be in downtown Toronto or in the suburban cities. I suppose that seems to be justification for keeping the status quo in terms of property taxation, that we're considered to be a world-class city if we have a declining property tax base. You have fewer commercial and industrial taxpayers to pay the freight. That seems to be quite acceptable.

Well, it isn't at all acceptable to the government of this province, and that's the rationale for moving on a new, unified city.

1620

**Mr Gerretsen:** First of all, let me congratulate the member for Oakwood for putting the whole matter of the megacity into its proper context in this hour-and-a-half debate.

It's interesting that since the Premier's come back there's already been agreement reached that this bill will not be given third reading until the referendum has been held some time in early March. It was interesting that prior to this the rest of the members in the government couldn't agree to that.

The second thing we now want to clearly establish is that the government will agree to at least one public meeting in each one of the six city halls that are involved in the megacity proposal. That's really what we're asking for and I think it's very reasonable.

Let's also remember that there are two issues here that are very closely connected, not only in Metro Toronto but indeed throughout the entire province, wherever amalgamations take place. We're talking about restructuring, amalgamations, so that we can create larger units so that there will be a larger tax base to pay for some of these costs that have been dumped on municipalities.

In my own municipality of Kingston, for example, a headline today in the *Whig-Standard* read: "Swapped Costs Shock City Staff." They have calculated — and this is not a partisan political document; this is a calculation for the city hall staff by a highly respected CEO and treasurer — that the extra costs to the city of Kingston alone will be \$23 million. As a matter of fact, \$25 million will come off the property tax roll by taking education off, but \$48 million, being made up in welfare, day care, social housing, long-term health care, public health programs, special care homes, transit etc., will be added on, for a net increase of \$23 million, which will cost the citizens of Kingston, based on last year's tax system, an extra 20% in taxes. There's a non-partisan calculation of what you're doing to this province. Shame on you.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** I want to congratulate the member for Oakwood on his remarks around Bill 103. I agree with him when he sounds the alarm around the particulars connected to this bill. People have a lot to fear. The member for Etobicoke-Rexdale talks very generally, but always non-specifically, about the issue of, do you support the status quo or not?

**Mr Hastings:** Where have you been for the past —

**Mr Marchese:** This person from the other side says that there are not going to —

**Mr Hastings:** Hundreds have left. Wake up.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Etobicoke-Rexdale.

**Mr Marchese:** The member for Etobicoke-Rexdale, please, calm down a second so I can respond to your remarks.

He speaks very generally about the fact that things are not working, that the status quo isn't working, so they have a plan.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Etobicoke-Rexdale, I don't want to warn you again.

**Mr Hastings:** Why don't you apply that to your own participants over there sometimes?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Have a little more respect for the Chair; otherwise I'll ask you to leave.

**Mr Hastings:** I may just leave anyway shortly.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Well, please, there won't be any debate then.

**Mr Marchese:** The member for Etobicoke-Rexdale says the status quo doesn't work, so they come up with a plan, and the plan is, "We're going to amalgamate the cities," even though Leach and Harris and all the others said before the election, "We won't do that." Then they have another plan, and the other plan involves the dumping of other services on to the municipality and the taxpayer. That's their plan. Is that the problem they're trying to fix, to put on the local taxpayer more of those costs? Because that's what it means, and the alarm is quite appropriately being raised by the member for Oakwood. Thank you for that opportunity.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Oakwood, you have two minutes.

**Mr Colle:** In terms of the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale, what I referred to in my presentation was that there is an alternative that's part of the future. If you listen to Golden and Greenberg and McCallion, where you create the GTA with competing, balanced municipalities, that is what the clear alternative is. The government's refusing to look at that.

In terms of the comments from the members for Fort York and Kingston and The Islands, they recognize that this government is refusing to listen to alternatives, refusing to listen to the citizens. What is most disturbing about this whole debate is that people all over Metro know that if this megacity plan goes through, what the board of trade predicted last week is going to happen 10 times.

There is going to be a flood of people leaving Metro because of the tax-dumping on Metro. If there's been an exodus out of Metro because of the tax differential, after megacity you won't have anybody left to pay the taxes, and that is why the board of trade and Conservatives like Gordon Chong and Alan Redway are saying: "Listen to the alternative. Don't barge ahead with this myopic view, because there's too much at stake."

What's at stake is the most successful city in North America, maybe one of the most successful cities in the world, where people want to participate, where they want to give to their community but they won't stand for being dictated to, they won't stand for being run roughshod over. They're saying to listen to them on the referendum, look at the alternatives, listen to the experts who are saying there's a better way, not just the megacity dumping.



**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Silipo:** I want to begin debate for our party in noting that we are now into the third day of debate on this bill and we're at the point where the third party is beginning its debate on this. I know the members opposite will say, "That's because of the bell-ringing that you did, otherwise we would have had more debate." But the point we have been trying to make through this whole discussion is that what is important to us first and foremost on this bill, as it is on many others, is that the government respect the democratic process, respect the democratic rights of the citizens of Metropolitan Toronto and respect the democratic process that is at the heart of this Parliament and of our traditions as a parliamentary democracy, not to ram through this bill without appropriate hearings and without listening to what people across Metropolitan Toronto and indeed even outside of Metropolitan Toronto have to say.

Yes, we have done some bell-ringing, but we have done it because we have needed to bring the government's attention to that very essential point, and it's fair to say that we've seen some results from that. Upon returning from his overseas trip the Premier stood in his place and agreed to what his Minister of Municipal Affairs had refused up until the day before: to ensure that hearings take place on this bill in a way that those hearings will still be taking place while the referendum on Metropolitan Toronto is being held. If the amalgamation of the six municipalities in Metropolitan Toronto is rejected, as I fully expect it will be rejected, by the people of Metropolitan Toronto in the referendum to be held on March 3, it will then put the government in a position of having to decide whether it wants to insist that only it knows what's best for the people of Metropolitan Toronto, as opposed to the people themselves, and continue to impose, continue to ram through with this bill, which makes no sense to anyone except of course to Mike Harris and the cohorts around Mike Harris.

The question of democracy is first and foremost in our minds in terms of how this bill should be dealt with. It hasn't been dealt with democratically so far and it needs to be dealt with democratically. I want to speak a little bit about that.

I also want to speak about another important aspect of this bill which troubles us very greatly: We see it very clearly as one of the first steps, and we've seen in the introduction of the other bills and the other measures during the mega-week, as it's been called, the first week of January of this sitting, the government introduce other measures, which clearly position this bill within those measures which collectively have as their objective to download on to the property tax base not just millions but billions of dollars in costs that are now borne at the provincial level, where they should be. I want to talk about that as well.

Madam Speaker, I'm reminded that before I proceed I should ask — I should have done this at the beginning, and I apologize — for concurrence of the House to be able to split this 90-minute opening time with my colleague from Fort York. I would ask that at this point.

1630

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Mr Silipo:** We have made that request, and I appreciate the House agreeing to it, because to us it's more important that we have as many people as are able to speak to this bill. We don't know what's going to happen beyond today. This being the third day of second reading debate on this, we may very well see a time allocation motion come as early as this afternoon. We will see by 5 o'clock if such a motion has been tabled. I would be interested if it is tabled. I'm sure somebody will bring it to my attention.

We will see if the government is so insistent on proceeding with this that it will go to those measures as opposed to allowing sensible debate here, but more importantly, allowing debate to take place outside of this Legislature, allowing the people of Metropolitan Toronto who want to be heard an opportunity to be heard on this bill. We know that as of today there are over 600 people, and the numbers keep growing by the day, who have asked to speak to the committee that will be dealing with this bill.

We know that discussions are still going on between the House leaders in terms of how this bill is going to be treated, but I just want to say for the record that although on the very key point of ensuring that the government will not try now to ram through this bill prior to the referenda in Metropolitan Toronto taking place — it has agreed to that — we still have not heard clearly enough decisions from the government that respond to the requests by hundreds of people to be heard on this issue, and that for us is essential.

Secondly, we have not heard clearly yet from the government on the question of ensuring that these hearings will be held not just here at Queen's Park but indeed in the different parts of Metropolitan Toronto, and we have specifically suggested and requested in the city hall chambers of each of the municipalities being affected by these changes, because those are also places that people are very used to being at. Those are also places that will house, quite frankly, many more people than can be housed in a committee room here.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** And it's friendly.

**Mr Silipo:** My colleague the member for Lake Nipigon says they're friendly. They are quite friendly as surroundings. They also allow for the televising of those hearings, as they would be televised if we were holding them here in the evenings or after the hours of the sittings of the Legislature. All of those things can be accomplished if only the government sees itself in a reasonable fashion and comes to that reasonable conclusion and says, "Let's sort out a way in which the many hundreds of people who want to be heard on this important issue get an opportunity to be heard."

Why is that so important? It's important on any significant change, but it is particularly important on this bill, given the way in which the government has chosen to act. We have throughout question period, throughout other pieces of debate that have taken place on this bill, raised many of these points, but they need to be reiterated, they need to be repeated, in the hope that somewhere along the line someone, whether it's Mike Harris himself or someone around him, might actually listen, might actually say, just as they did on the issue of



ensuring that the referendum is allowed to proceed before the bill is finalized, either, "This makes sense, Premier," or, "Look, it's just politically too hurtful for us to proceed without some semblance of respect for the democratic process."

The reason we continue to stress that is not just because of our strong belief in the need for the democratic process to be served here as we would want it to be served anywhere else, but we do it also for one very fundamental reason, and that is that what this government is doing, what the Mike Harris government is doing in imposing Bill 103, not only in the way in which it's doing it but in the substance of what it's doing, is completely contrary to what it promised in the last election it was going to do.

It's completely the opposite to what Al Leach said, to what Mike Harris said, to what other members of this government said that they were going to do. What is flabbergasting is to see the minister responsible stand in his place, as he did just the other day when he was introducing this bill and speaking in the opening debate, and say: "What exactly did we promise in the Common Sense Revolution?" — with respect to this issue — "We said that Ontario would have less government. We said there should be fewer politicians, there should be less bureaucracy and there should be less overlap and duplication. This legislation will help us reach those goals."

That's what he said. That's the way he's now trying to get out of the very clear promise that Mike Harris made not that long ago. In fact, it was on April 3, 1995, that there was a major debate, involving the three party leaders at the time, on the future of Metropolitan Toronto. Do you know what Mike Harris said at that time? He talked about — not downloading, and I'll want to come back to that — but specifically around governance he said that the Metro level of government in its present form must go. Clearly at that point he was saying that changes, if he were the government, would come about. I don't quibble with the fact that it's been on the record.

Here's the key part which neither the Premier, in questions I've put to him, nor Minister Al Leach has dared to quote back when they have quoted from this very report. What they said was:

"The Metro level of government must be totally restructured. Responsibility for the delivery of some services should be moved to the local level. Others, such as transportation, should be structured on an expanded regional basis beyond the current Metro boundaries. Some services may have to be assumed by the province."

Any reasonable person reading that, any reasonable person listening to Mike Harris in that debate quote from the Mike Harris Task Force on Bringing Common Sense to Metro, the task force chaired by Joyce Trimmer, co-chaired by Al Leach, supported by Dave Johnson, with the member for High Park-Swansea as one of its members — it clearly was talking about envisioning change in the governance structure of Metropolitan Toronto, the change coming about, in their view, by eliminating the Metro level of government, maintaining the local level of government, that which we know as the individual cities or, in the case of East York, the borough, and then restructuring the services, some of them being moved

down, some of them being moved up to the province and others on a regional basis.

What do we have instead? We have the elimination now of the local municipalities, the creation of one large city, one megacity, and we have, yes, the beginnings of something to deal with the regional structure. But there's no way that Mike Harris and Al Leach can get away from the fact that they said to people during the election that they would maintain the lower level of municipal government in Metropolitan Toronto. They were so clear.

I still don't know whether what we're hearing from the minister and the Premier these days is really an attempt to pretend that what they promised was something different or is really just an attempt to escape from what they in fact promised. But people know that what they promised was to maintain the local level of government and to make whatever changes they were going to make by eliminating the Metro level of government and restructuring the services, some up and some down.

People in Metropolitan Toronto would have been much more understanding of what the government is doing had they said they were going to look at changing all levels of government in Metropolitan Toronto, but that's not what they said. People in Metropolitan Toronto, justifiably, can be angry, can be upset when they see that what this government is doing now, in proceeding with Bill 103, is completely contrary to what it promised it would do in the election. This, from a Premier who likes to pride himself on keeping his promises.

We've talked in this House many a time about the wisdom or truth or untruths of those other statements. Obviously in our view, and I think in the view of many people across the province, the Premier isn't keeping some of the other big promises he made around jobs — remember the 725,000 jobs? — on maintaining funding to the health care system, the health care envelope that wouldn't be touched, and we're seeing that promise trampled on; the promise to keep classroom spending — remember that other one? — and the minister cutting initially \$400 million from that, first pretending it wasn't going to affect the classroom, then admitting that it was going to affect the classroom but blaming the school boards for that and then compounding that by saying, "We're going to take another \$600 million out of the system."

Even on those other big issues we have reason, and the people of the province more particularly have lots of reasons, to doubt what the Premier of the day is saying about keeping their promises. But he's the one who parades around saying, "We're going to keep our promises," and here is a very clear case where they are not. Here is a very clear case where they are doing completely the opposite to what they said they would do in the last election.

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For that reason if for no other, it would be incumbent upon this government, if it wanted to proceed in this direction, to put out that proposal and then say, "We're going to listen to what people have to say and we will see through the course of those hearings and that discussion if this is the correct course of action to take." But that's not what they're doing. What they are doing is



proceeding on a decision they clearly had made some time ago, and even the way in which this decision was introduced in the House, they didn't come to it by saying: "We've changed our minds. For all these reasons we believe now that this is the best course of action." No, the decision kind of trickled out bit by bit from the Minister of Municipal Affairs. We asked him in the House one day, "Is this what you're looking at?" "No, it's not" — steps outside in the scrum, "Yes, it is." So piece by piece we managed to get the story out, first that it was the minister's preferred option, then we saw as the days wore on that it was becoming and indeed had become the government's preferred option to the point that they would not listen to any other suggestion.

Then they tried to put a process on top of that. When they realized that they were very empty in terms of having any process at all, they asked Mr David Crombie to see what he could do with this issue. What did Mr Crombie do? They were hoping, they were expecting that Mr Crombie would come back and say, "Yes, amalgamate all the municipalities in Metropolitan Toronto," but he didn't do that. While that may have been his own preferred position, even he said very clearly, "Don't muck around inside Metropolitan Toronto unless you are prepared to deal first with what is the key issue relating to the greater Toronto area," and that isn't how to govern inside of Metropolitan Toronto; it's an important issue but it is not the key issue.

The key issue is to look at the greater Toronto area as one economic entity and to recognize that any changes to governance, any changes to structuring, any changes to delivery of services have to take into account and have to start from the basic premise that the metropolis now is bigger than Metropolitan Toronto, that the economic entity is bigger than Metropolitan Toronto and that therefore what you need, Mr Crombie said, as Anne Golden had said before him, is a way to bring together, first in terms of delivery of services and second in terms of some kind of governance structure, that reality at a greater Toronto area level.

That's where I think this government should be acting first. That is the big mistake they are making in not proceeding to deal with that reality. If they were a government that was truly concerned with how to restructure the governance and the delivery of services in the greater Toronto area in a way that would last for the next 20, 30, 40, 50 years, they would be dealing with that issue first and foremost.

We know we have instead a government that likes to deal in small, cheap political symbols. So it's quite convenient for Mike Harris to be able to stand up and say: "Look at all the politicians we have now inside Metropolitan Toronto. We can get rid of half of them. Just with a stroke of a pen we can get rid of half of them," and all of a sudden people are going to think they're getting better service; people are going to think they're going to get cheaper services; people are going to believe they're going to get more streamlined governance and services.

It's a bit of a con game because it doesn't get at the real issue in terms of the greater Toronto area needing to be looked at first and foremost, and second, there is no

proof whatsoever that even Mike Harris's theory and Al Leach's theory about one megacity resulting in fewer costs will be true. There is no proof whatsoever of that. On the contrary, if you want to base the projections on any realistic examples that exist, then the conclusion you would come to is that it's going to cost more, not less, if you go to one large city.

At a simple argument level, people get drawn into this argument that says, "If you have seven municipalities now and you go to one, surely it's going to be cheaper." The logic just seems to be there, and we have to understand that that is exactly what Mike Harris and Al Leach are preying upon. It's that simplistic way of looking at things that says, "If now you have seven local governments and you bring them together into one, surely that means that it's going to cost us, the taxpayers, less."

The only area in which it's going to cost people less in a very small way may be in the number of politicians who are there, but go one step beyond that and it's going to start to cost more, a lot more, because at the end of the day, the basic cost of delivering municipal services, just like the basic cost of delivering any good public service at whatever level, lies not in the head honchos, lies not in the bureaucracy of management — yes, you can find some savings in any restructuring on that level — but the basic cost and the large percentage of cost lie in the hundreds and, depending on the case, the thousands of people who actually deliver the services. So the only way that you can find savings at the end of the day is if you are really wanting to cut services, and unless that's what Mike Harris also wants to do, then you're not going to find the savings.

The one support that the government has for itself, the one report they have managed to bring about that supports their theory, points out the famous KPMG study. Remember that? It says that yes, you can find some savings, maybe a couple of hundred million dollars — I don't want to sound like a couple of hundred million dollars is not a lot of money; it is, but it isn't a lot of money in the scheme of the things we're talking about — but even if they were right, and that's a big if, they themselves admit two important things would have to happen.

First of all, most of those savings would be found not as a result of restructuring, not as a result of the amalgamation, but indeed as a result of just looking at better ways to do things which could just as easily be done in the present structure of delivery of services, in the present structure of the six local governments in Metropolitan Toronto.

Second, they say the impact of those kinds of savings would mean 4,500 fewer jobs, 4,500 fewer people delivering those basic services; not 4,500 fewer senior administrators or bureaucrats, but 4,500 fewer people delivering basic services like garbage pickup, like social services, like child care and on and on, many of the basic services that we take for granted sometimes at the municipal level.

That's the only way you're going to find those kinds of savings, so that's also a bit of a shallow promise and a bit of a shallow point, to say you're going to find these big savings: not unless you're prepared to gut services as



they're being offered today; not unless you're prepared, as this government is obviously prepared, to say, "We'll have those services delivered through the private sector," which sometimes can offer them for cheaper, but how? By ensuring that the people who deliver those services will make less and less and less.

That's of course a very significant part of what the Mike Harris government is all about. It's about lowering wages. It's about lowering the quality of life for people. It's about saying you have to take less, you have to accept less.

**Mr Marchese:** So we can compete with Mexico.

**Mr Silipo:** So we can compete, as my colleague says, with the likes of Mexico.

This is the same Premier who has just been in the Far East promoting Ontario, appropriately so, but in doing that, he and the Prime Minister at the federal level, but the Premier in this case was vaunting the many good things about Ontario and indeed the many good things about Toronto: that we have a highly skilled workforce, that we have a good transportation service, that we have a good series of social services, that we have a variety of services. They just happen to be the same services they are stripping away, piece by piece. The things they are on the one hand vaunting and saying, "This is what makes Toronto and Ontario the best place in the world to live; come and invest here," they are at the same time tearing away piece by piece. People are beginning to understand that that is a main objective of this government.

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Of course this government would rather just impose this bill; of course this government would rather just ram through this bill. They know that if they dared to listen to the people of Metropolitan Toronto, they would have to turn around and say: "Oops, we goofed. Sorry, we can't do this." It is so regrettable, because here was an opportunity, a government that was prepared to act, a government that had said, "Yes, we're going to make some changes."

I have to say, and I want to say very clearly, that the will to make some changes in terms of the governance structure within the GTA is a good thing. I do not want for one second to leave the impression in anyone's mind that, in opposing so strenuously Bill 103, I am supporting the status quo. I believe fundamentally that there has to be change in the way local government works within Metropolitan Toronto, between Metropolitan Toronto and the rest of the GTA, and primarily within the GTA, at the GTA level itself. I welcome the willingness of the government to make some change, to look at some change, but I abhor and I oppose strongly the machiavelian way in which they have gone about making their decision about what is best, in their view, for the people of Metropolitan Toronto and the GTA, and second, the substance of what they are doing itself.

They have not addressed the problems except in the simplistic notion of trying to say to people: "Look at what we're doing. Look at how we're doing this. We're eliminating all these politicians." Somehow they want to project that as having resolved the problem. That isn't going to resolve the problem. They know that in their hearts.

I think the most interesting part of this process is going to be when on March 4 we all wake up and have the results of the referenda in Metropolitan Toronto, which, unless I'm reading so incorrectly what's going on, will show opposition to what the government is doing. We will then see what Mike Harris and Al Leach have to say about that. That will be the real test of how obtuse they are. That will be the real test of whether there is any inkling of common sense really there other than the words they like to use. If there is any inkling of common sense left, then what we will see is the government having to take account of a real rejection by the people of Metropolitan Toronto of their megacity scheme and having to take account of the will of the people as expressed through those referenda.

We've heard on this the government continuing to say: "People can go ahead and have all the referenda they want, but we're not going to listen to this because it doesn't really make any difference to us at the end of the day. We've made up our minds." Some people might say, "What's the point of the referenda?" and the minister has even stood in this House and mocked the process that municipalities are using.

On one occasion he stood up and was mocking the fact that the various municipalities are using different ways of holding the vote, different from the traditional method — some are doing the phone-in system; some are using a mail-in ballot — until we reminded the minister that of course these measures they are using, these methods of holding the referenda are exactly the same ones that he introduced himself in Bill 86 only some weeks ago and lauded as being more progressive and even cheaper than the traditional method of holding referenda. Now instead we see the minister trying to mock those municipalities that are taking advantage of that process.

The other interesting contradiction that I have just been fascinated to see is how, in dealing with this issue, the minister in particular and others have said they don't like this referendum in Metropolitan Toronto, they have really no appetite for it, and yet about a hundred yards from here in one of the committee rooms we have been debating during the same time frame a proposal from the government members to proceed with a report that will eventually result in legislation that will allow for referenda to be held, and not just referenda initiated by the government but indeed referenda initiated by citizens' groups.

What an interesting contradiction for members of the same government, to be on the one hand saying, "Yes, we want to have the people have greater say; we want to have the people have the ability to hold referenda, to require that referenda be held," and here, where there is such a clear expression through some of the larger municipal governments of this province, requests for a referendum, a decision for a referendum to be held supported by citizens groups and many hundreds of citizens throughout Metropolitan Toronto, this government is saying, "You can hold all the referenda you want, but we're not going to listen." Isn't that fascinating?

I think the day will come when the government will have to listen, because if they won't listen, then they will



have to deal with the fallout of that. I just want to point out on that very point the statement made by somebody with respect to what happens if the government actually decides to ignore the will of the people. This individual put it this way: "If the government has the gall to ignore the people, they won't last long." This individual was the same individual who chaired that task force. These were the words of Joyce Trimmer, speaking to a meeting in North York a few short weeks ago where she described the decision of this government as a complete flip-flop from the position they held at the beginning of 1995.

So when I stand up and say to the Premier and say to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing that what you are doing is completely contrary to what you promised in the election, it's not just me saying that; it's also Joyce Trimmer, one of the people who actually co-authored the very report that was the basis for the position Premier Harris and Minister Al Leach took into the election. If people like that are telling you that what you are doing today is completely the opposite of what you promised in the last election, then you should listen to them.

You may not want to listen to me, you may not want to listen to other members in the opposition, you may indeed not want to listen to hundreds of people out there who are telling you that what you're doing is wrong, but surely you have a great difficulty in not listening or at least acknowledging that what you are doing is completely the opposite of what you promised when the person or people who are pointing that out to you are your own political allies; is, as in this case, one of the individuals who actually authored your position on this.

The question of democracy, the question of process, the question of how this government deals with this is for us a fundamental one, but the other part of it is that in the game the Tories are playing, in the game Mike Harris is trying to play there is a little bit of sleight of hand, and that comes in a couple of ways.

1700

I mentioned earlier that one of the things this government likes to be able to do is to keep its message simple, talking about, you know, "Look at all the politicians we are dealing with," and they can point to Metropolitan Toronto and say: "Look, it's overgoverned. We need to reduce. We need to reduce." Of course, as the mayors themselves pointed out when they put together their report, if the approach was a commonsense one then what they're doing wouldn't make much sense.

They say there are too many politicians in Metropolitan Toronto. If you look at the ratios that exist in some of the other parts of the GTA, then they should be crying for change in those areas. You look at places like Brampton, for example, where the ratio of local politicians to electors is 1 to 15,000 almost as compared to, for example, the city of Toronto, where it's 1 to 37,000, or the city of North York, where it's 1 to 39,000. You look at other communities like Milton or Oakville: Milton — 1 to 3,000; Oakville — 1 to 9,800.

What do these numbers show? These numbers show that if overgovernance was a real concern that the Tories had and Mike Harris had, then the place they should start is not in Metropolitan Toronto but indeed in the 905 area,

because according to these figures that's where there is overgovernance, that's where there is such a ratio of municipal politicians to electors, to the population even, and that's where changes need to be made.

But of course we know that this government isn't about to make any changes to the 905 part of the GTA. Why? All you have to do is take a look at that map that OSSTF is good enough to send us once every election where they colour-code the ridings according to political party. You look at the 905 area and right now it all happens to be Tory blue. So of course Mike Harris wouldn't dare make any changes in the 905 area because then he'd have a whole bunch of backbenchers very upset at him. It seems for some reason in the 416 area inside Metropolitan Toronto they're prepared to sacrifice some of those seats, in part because they'll have fewer of them as a result of the changes they've made to reduce the number of seats, whereas in the 905 area there will actually be at least one more, or one and a half, depending on how you look at the boundaries.

What we are seeing here again is a very crass, opportunistic, partisan action taken by Mike Harris and company. That's what this is about. It's not about better governance for the GTA. It's not about finding the best solutions for Metropolitan Toronto. It's about sheer partisan politics. As bad as that is, what's also fundamentally behind the actions of this government, and we've seen this is spades through the announcements made during the first week of January here at Queen's Park, the so-called mega-week announcements, is that what's going on is a major downloading of costs on to the municipal tax base.

We've seen, yes, the government say, "We're going to take education off the property tax," in and of itself a useful thing to do, but coupled on the other side of the coin with a push down on to the municipal tax base, not just as the Premier wants to pretend of an equivalent amount, but we know at the end of the day of a greater amount than the money being spent now on education, the \$5.4 billion of education spending that's borne now by the property tax base, or the residential portion of it.

We know what's going to happen at the end of the day is that we will see more of these services being paid for through the property tax. What services do these include? They include social services, welfare, long-term care, the cost of looking after our seniors into the future and they include child care, just to mention a few. Those also happen to be the costs that are going to grow, because despite some drop that we are seeing now in the cost of welfare, in the rolls at least, the costs are still showing as increasing, and indeed they will increase, unfortunately. Long-term care can only go up if we're serious about providing the level of care that's necessary for our seniors into the future. The property tax base is just not the base that should be paying for these.

People ask: "What's the difference? It's all taxes at the end of the day." Mike Harris himself said it, again in that April 3 debate I mentioned earlier, when he said: "When we talk about different levels of government and who should tax and pay for what, let us remember there is only one taxpayer. We must end the old politics of downloading one government's problems on to another."



Those are the words of Mike Harris on April 3, 1995, words he's clearly chosen to put aside because what we see Mike Harris doing today is completely the opposite of what he said on April 3, 1995.

We see Mike Harris now involved in the biggest downloading of costs on to the property tax base that any provincial government has ever been involved in. We see Mike Harris pushing on to the property tax base, on to the most regressive form of taxation, costs that have no reason being there, costs like social services, like health care. Those are costs that should be paid for through the general income tax system, just as education should be. If the logic applies to one, then the logic should equally apply to the other. Of course, this isn't about logic; this is about how Mike Harris can download enough so that he can take another \$600 million or \$1 billion out of the education system, and he can do it a lot easier if the control is here at the provincial level than if it's at the school board level.

At the same time, he can push down on to the municipal tax base those other costs like welfare costs, like long-term-care costs, like other health care and social services costs that are going to increase, and then say to the municipalities: "If you don't want these costs to increase, then cut somewhere else. Get rid of other services. Privatize services. You can do all sorts of things." Then the people will blame the municipalities for those cuts or, on the other hand, will blame the municipalities for the increases in property taxes that they will sometimes, and I hope often, choose in order to maintain the basic level of services we have now.

It's a con game, it's a game that at the end of the day is only being put in place because what Mike Harris, Ernie Eves and Al Leach have to do through this exercise, whether you call it a mega-week exercise, whether you call it the Who Does What or the Who Does What to Whom exercise, what they want to do and what they have to do is to find \$3 billion worth of cuts in order to finish paying for their provincial tax cut, for the phoney tax scheme that they believe will create the jobs that we haven't seen so far with half of the tax scheme being implemented.

That's what it's about. It's not about better government in Metropolitan Toronto; it's not about finding a way to deal with the needs of the greater Toronto area into the future; it's not doing that. If it was about doing that, then this government would have followed the advice that David Crombie gave to it when he said: "First and foremost, find a structure to deal with governance at the greater Toronto area level. Second, take two to three months and look at what possible amalgamations you can make inside of Metropolitan Toronto at the lower level and between Metropolitan Toronto and the GTA municipalities surrounding it." Those would have been the actions of a wise government, if it had taken that time and if it had taken that course of action.

As pressing as the problems around governance are with respect to civic government in Metropolitan Toronto and the other part of that on the school board side, as pressing as those may be, they are not the most pressing problems we have in terms of either governance or dealing with taxation and the delivery of services in the

greater Toronto area. The most pressing issues have to do with how you set up a structure that governs into the next half-century at least, and how do you then make sense of governance at the local level in a way that sorts out the responsibilities between that greater Toronto area body and the local individual municipalities in a way that says: "The local municipality does this. In the greater Toronto area we will provide for the delivery of services such as transportation, public transit, those kinds of services that need to be clearly coordinated at the broader level."

1710

You don't do it by jumping in and saying: "We're going to mess around inside Metropolitan Toronto. We're not going to touch the 905 area, because that's where our political allies are." You don't do it unless, of course, you're Mike Harris, and unless, of course, your agenda has got nothing to do with streamlining government and has everything to do with cutting and slashing and pushing down on to the property tax base those costs in a way that means that for the average family the cost of services will go up.

The average family will be paying more at the end of the day, even when they take into account the little benefit that they will get from the provincial tax cut, because that benefit will be more than eaten up at the end of the day by the additional costs of user fees, direct and indirect tax increases at the property tax level. Whether people are homeowners or whether they're tenants, they're going to get hit. They're going to get hit with bigger increases or they're going to see severe slashing in the level of services they are now getting. It's one or the other. You can't have it both ways. That's going to be what we will see.

If you're Mike Harris, that makes sense, because you know that the people who support you if you're Mike Harris are going to benefit. The powerful and the rich among our society are going to benefit from the tax cut. Indeed they're even going to benefit from all of this downloading, because at the end of the day the benefit they will get from the provincial tax cut for them will mean something, but only for them, only for those who are making \$200,000; only for those who are making \$150,000 and more will there be some benefit.

I would suggest that even some of those at the end of the day will see that what they've lost if they live in Metropolitan Toronto may not be worth the price of those extra dollars in their pockets, because what we will have lost in Metropolitan Toronto is any sense of a relationship between local politicians and the people they represent. If what you have at the end of the day is fewer politicians having to respond to larger numbers of people, then it only follows that what you have from that is a bureaucracy that is more distant from the people and a bureaucracy that, even as well-meaning as it might be, will never be able to respond to the local concerns that citizens have.

Whether it's garbage pickup or whether it's the delivery of child care services and any of the myriad issues in between, they will never be able to respond in quite the same effective way as a local politician who knows how to listen to his or her constituents. That is the beauty of local government. You know that. You were



there, Madam Speaker. I was there on the other side of it, on the school board side.

We will be dealing one of these days with the other half of this megalomaniac approach this government has taken, this megacity approach, because of course we're seeing here in Metropolitan Toronto at the same time as we are seeing the creation of this megacity that there will also be the creation of a mega school board. Imagine, one school board with over 300,000 students, 500 schools, trustees who will have to somehow look after about 25 schools each, and by the way, on a yearly stipend of \$5,000. So don't look for anybody who is going to spend any amount of time doing that job.

That's the world Mike Harris is taking us into, the world where democracy counts for less, the world where accountability counts for less, the world in which the relationship between the people and the politicians they elect to represent their wishes gets distanced more and more, the world in which there is greater centralization of power to fewer and fewer people and the world in which there is greater centralization of the wealth into fewer and fewer people's hands. That's the world Mike Harris is taking us into, day by day, piece by piece.

I think people are beginning to see this. I think people are beginning to understand what is happening. I think people are beginning to see what the Mike Harris agenda is all about. When you have, as we saw last week, groups like the board of trade —

**Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre):** Tony, you're depressing me.

**Mr Silipo:** Somebody says I'm depressing them. As long as it's a Tory member, that's fine. Maybe if I depress you enough, something will go off in your head and you will see that there is not any logic to what you're doing.

Just the other day, this past week, we saw some more clear signs of that understanding and more good Tories beginning to voice their objections to what the government is doing. One of them described himself as a recently excommunicated Tory member.

**Mr Marchese:** Mr Chong.

**Mr Silipo:** Mr Chong. I think he was joking about that part because he's still a card-carrying member, as far as I know. He was pointing out that what this government is doing in downloading these services, particularly the social services costs, on to the property tax base is just completely wrong.

The board of trade, a group not unknown to support this government, made the very same point, again, that what they are doing is wrong.

The mayors in the 905 region are supposed to be the political allies of this government and they're saying, "My God, if they're doing it to Toronto, it's also going to affect us." They also understand what's going on, they also understand that with this downloading they too will get hit, maybe not as hard as Metropolitan Toronto, but they too will get hit. They too see that it's illogical to shift on to the property tax base costs for the so-called soft services: social services, welfare, health care, long-term care, child care. Those costs should be borne by the provincial income tax system, not the property tax system.

If those folks are saying now that what the government is doing is wrong, I can just imagine the discussions going on in the back rooms of the government as they are trying to grapple with how they are going to get this revolution back on the rails, how they're going to get this train back on the rails, because it's clearly going off the rails.

They won't admit it, I don't expect them to admit it, but when you see some victories that we are winning — and I don't mean "we" in terms of us on the opposition side, I mean that the people out there are winning — such as the Premier coming back from his overseas trip and within minutes of being in this House saying, "Yes, we'll allow the hearings to go on beyond the referendum" —

**Mr Douglas B. Ford (Etobicoke-Humber):** A reasonable man.

**Mr Silipo:** A reasonable man? Perhaps. I don't think so. There's a lot more I'm going to have to see from Mike Harris before I put that adjective next to him. A reasonable man? I don't think so. But if he continues along those lines, maybe it shows that he's beginning to understand that his train is going off the tracks, that he's beginning to understand that you can't continue to take for granted the people of the province, that he's beginning to understand, as Joyce Trimmer says, "If they have the gall to ignore the people, they won't last long," that he's beginning to understand that you cannot make decisions in a way that takes people for granted.

If you believe at all in the democratic process, you have to take heed of what the people are saying, and the people are saying they don't agree with this downloading, they don't agree with this tax cut if it means sacrificing the basic services we have developed as Ontarians. They're saying, "If that's the cost of the tax cut, then we don't want it," and specifically on Bill 103 they are saying, "It doesn't make sense to do what you're doing." It's undemocratic, it's not what the people of Metropolitan Toronto want and they and we are going to oppose you to the hilt on this.

1720

I only hope that little retrenchment we saw from the Premier so far will be but a first step as we continue to point out to the members opposite how wrong they are in what they're doing. Now that they've agreed to some form of hearings, and more importantly to hearings that will go beyond the referenda, I say to people who are interested in this issue, people who have any interest at all in maintaining the democratic process in this province and within Metropolitan Toronto in particular, to take the referenda process, to use it to say clearly to Mike Harris that what he's doing on Bill 103 and what he's doing in downloading the various services on to the property tax system is wrong. Then let's see Mike Harris proceed, if he will, to impose this decision against the will of the people. I don't know that he'll do that, but let's see what happens.

My trust is with the people out there who continue to believe that even this government at some point has to begin to listen to what people are saying. I think the next three or four weeks will be very telling in terms of where this government is going and whether it is prepared to



begin to understand that getting elected once every four or five years does not give you a licence to strangle democracy, and it certainly does not give you a licence to dismantle all of the good things about this province that make us the envy of the world. That's a mandate that no government, not Mike Harris today and no government before him and no government after him, will ever be given by the people of this province, because at the heart of the changes is the process of democracy and that process of democracy doesn't stop with an election every four or five years; that process of democracy is ongoing. That process of democracy demands that the government of the day listen to the people it purports to represent, especially when it brings forward directions and actions that are contrary to what it promised it would do during the election.

That is the way in which any good government that wants to retain the support of the people has to behave. That's not the way in which this government is behaving, and unless it's prepared to change its ways, the people will remember.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Marchese:** I want to congratulate my colleague from Dovercourt on the tenacity with which he is fighting this bill and this government, and on his strong support for democracy in allowing people in Metropolitan Toronto in particular to have a say so that at the end of the day, one way or the other, people will have had what they need, and that is to be a part of this process and not to be excluded.

A year ago or so we had a government on the other side — and I will get to that because I want to talk about Mr Leach and some of the things he said prior to the election. But he announced a little while ago something that in Metropolitan Toronto became very distasteful. He announced the amalgamation of all the cities, and he said in the region outside of Metro, "You will have a facilitator to guide you through this process of possibly amalgamating in your own regions."

When the people of Metro saw the differential treatment they got, they became very upset and very angry. They could only deduce that it was for political reasons, which are clear to me and becoming clearer to everybody else. The reason people in the 905 region are being treated differently is because they have supported this government strongly, and they continue, it appears, to support this government, whereas in Metropolitan Toronto it's a little different. They didn't have the same level of support as in the 905, so they thought they could do in Metro what they want. But it's backfiring, because people in Metro are saying: "We don't want autocracy in our area. We want the same level of treatment as everybody else, and not just in the 905 area but across Ontario."

They're getting a facilitator to guide them through this process outside. We get no facilitation here in Metropolitan Toronto and we believe that is wrong. I'm not the only one, as a politician, saying it's wrong. People in Metropolitan Toronto are saying it's wrong. They're very, very worried about what is taking place, because what happens in Metro they fear is also going to happen outside of Metro.

While people outside of Metro relish the thought that we are the only ones who are being beaten up, many are beginning to understand that this government is after them as well. Yes, they have found a common enemy in Ontario by fighting Toronto specifically and attacking Metropolitan Toronto, but that's a short-lived attack. It's a short-lived pleasure that people are getting, because as we've seen in the announcements, the assault on all municipalities is happening as they dump all of the other services that should properly be funded by the province of Ontario.

First of all, people are angry that we are getting different treatment here in Metro. I tell you frankly, we don't like it. Very few people in Metro like it. As I talk to the member from Brampton, he tells me how some people call and say, "You're doing a great thing by amalgamating Metro." Of course, because he thinks he's not going to be touched by it all, but he will. I will get to some of the comments to show how he's going to be touched, how people in Brampton are going to be touched by it.

The government says it wants to amalgamate because it will be cheaper. There is no evidence for that whatsoever. The Premier and the minister gleefully talk about all the great savings when you amalgamate: "So many different people are gone. One body will deliver the services." Everybody should feel happy to know, because the Premier has told us, there will be savings, and only because the Premier's told us. Is there any evidence for that, Mr Premier? None. There is no evidence for that whatsoever, but it doesn't seem to faze this Premier or this minister or the members of this government. They just pray that they can convince the majority of people that this vague, general plan that they've got for Metro is working and that they will save some money.

Professor Andrew Sancton, in his review of all of these amalgamations across Canada, has discovered of course that there is no evidence for this. He says, "There is no academic evidence to suggest that consolidation produces savings." That is a conclusion that Professor Sancton has made in his review of all the studies.

In another study that I have here in front of me, a number of other people abandoned their efforts to amalgamate. "Further indications," Professor Kitchen says, "are that in Rotterdam, after a recent review, a decision was made to preserve local municipalities in response to public reaction to an amalgamation proposal." Similarly, in Portland, Oregon, of all places, a decision was made to preserve local cities. In a number of places in the world where they were considering this, they came to the conclusion that bigger is not better, that centralizing the services is not necessarily better whatsoever and doesn't save any money.

This government is moving contrary to the direction people are offering through their studies, and it almost makes no sense. Usually, as some other study from Newfoundland, the provincial government's amalgamation proposal and economists' perspective, says, "Provincial legislators ought to demonstrate to the public why accepting any amalgamation proposal is in the public interest."



Usually it is incumbent on governments to show that what they are doing is in the general interest of the public. They have offered none. There is no evidence. There is only the word of Mike Harris that you are going to save. Well, I suggest to you that by listening to Mike Harris you're going to have to accept a bigger tax bill; that's what's coming. That is why people need to think about this alarm that many people are raising — not just from the opposition ranks but by many others as well.

1730

Here's another one, "Sounding the Alarm," where the Toronto fire chief, Peter Ferguson, was reported to have said, on December 16: "There's been no active fire service participation in the process. I don't know who they're drawing on for expertise. It shouldn't go to the consultants and the number crunchers. We should have some input."

People like that have a great deal of credibility in their communities, and they're worried. People like that are worried. Not only have they not been consulted, but they think this process is moving in the wrong direction.

My colleague mentioned people from the board of trade, an interesting article.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** I think the Liberals should be here listening to you.

**Mr Marchese:** They should, but we probably have a quorum.

Here's a headline, "Business: Tory Plan a Threat to Metro." "Soaring taxes will speed up exodus to the suburbs, says board of trade. The board of trade warns changes to result in property tax hikes."

It's not just people in opposition who are raising the alarm and are very worried about what you're doing; we have now come to the point where even your own allies are very worried. If they weren't worried, they would not have had a press conference with a banker and the board of trade and the United Way to tell you that they're very concerned about what you are about to do. The very things you say about why you need to change the system are the very things this group of people is saying are causing the opposite of what you intend.

When you have members talking about the fact that we need change, that the status quo is wrong and we need change to make Metropolitan Toronto stronger, people like the board of trade, your friends, people like bankers generally, your friends, and the United Way, an institution that's very concerned about what will happen to services, have held a press conference to tell you to go slowly, to reflect on what you're doing and hopefully decide that you are on the wrong track of this issue.

I understand you wouldn't want to listen to the rest of us, but surely you would want to listen to them, because normally this is your sounding board, not mine. When a banker says, "Oh, let's not attack the banks too much," while that same individual makes \$3.5 million, I don't get too worried about that kind of comment, but people like yourselves should, because this is your sounding board, as opposed to mine, and if he's sounding and they're sounding the alarm, it seems to me that you people over there should listen to that kind of comment.

We have got here a problem that is very massive. You have now taken the education portion out of property

taxes. It's \$5.4 billion. Your minister and your Premier talk happily about how this is a great thing you have done. Change was necessary, people have clamoured to eliminate the education portion of the property taxes, and you've finally delivered. I can see the faces on the other side smiling about the fact you've kept that promise. It's great, you took out the education portion of property taxes. You've done a good thing. That's something I have supported for a long time. You take the education portion out of property taxes and you fund it provincially. I believe in that very strongly. I recall, during another debate, when some of your members over there agreed with what I said.

**Mr Jim Flaherty (Durham Centre):** Good. Stop when you're right. Stop right there.

**Mr Marchese:** When you tell me, "Good," and, "Stop right there," you're missing the point. The fact of the matter is, you haven't done that. What you have done is taken that portion out of property taxes, and you are replacing that with an equivalent amount. Not only that; you're going to add to that.

Some people were not much worried about this issue of amalgamation. I suspect there are a lot of people who didn't think this is too bad an idea, although many of that group that has been organizing against this particular bill do. But once you have added the dumping of all those services that properly belong to the province, you have gained new enemies out there. You might have been able to convince some of the people that amalgamation was a good thing — you might have been able to achieve that on its own — but when you dump these other services you have created a whole new enemy out there, not just in Metropolitan Toronto, but everywhere.

You have created enemies of people who believe that welfare should not be something that the taxpayer or the owner of a home should subsidize. They say that the provincial income tax is the place for that, and I agree. Long-term care is something, they argue, that should be funded by the province and not by the property taxpayer, and I agree with them. Long-term care is going to be a very expensive thing. You haven't calculated that long-term cost. You've only calculated the initial transfer of your costs, but you have not calculated the cost of some of you seniors, who will soon become seniors, that we will have to support you through the property tax. We're going to have to support a whole lot of seniors to my left and in front of me very, very soon. We're not talking later. That's a problem.

**Mr Pouliot:** Some of them are healthy, thank heaven.

**Mr Marchese:** Healthy or not, those services need to be funded by the province through an income tax system.

They have passed the cost of housing completely on to the municipalities. That's a wrong thing to do, very wrong. Housing —

**Mrs Marland:** I'm going to rise on a point of order. It's getting too boring. Mr Speaker, I'm raising a point of order which actually isn't in our procedural book —

**The Speaker:** It probably it isn't a point of order, to the member for Mississauga South. I appreciate your interjection and your frankness. The member for Fort York.



**Mr Marchese:** Housing has been passed on or will be passed on now —

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener):** Tony, if I had known that Rosario was the one who was going to be speaking, I wouldn't have given you consent.

**Mr Marchese:** Mr Speaker, I want to — I got their attention. Thank you very much. I got their attention so I don't need you any more. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** You always have my attention.

**Mr Marchese:** They're passing on the full cost of housing to the municipalities. One would never have dreamed, in this place or outside this place, that this government would have the fortitude to pass on welfare, long-term care and housing. No one would have believed they would do that.

Housing is a costly business, especially public housing. A study we did in 1994 showed that the costs to retrofit those buildings are in the area of \$230 million. I didn't see the government calculate that into its costs, into what they are transferring to the municipalities, but municipalities have added those figures up and they know that they're going to pick up the cost of housing. It's in the area of \$240 million. It wasn't added up.

**Mr Ford:** How come?

**Mr Marchese:** How come? Because the housing stock is old. It's approximately 30, 35 years old, most of it, and that needs repairs. Yes, some money was put in, but a lot more money has to be put into that sector to be able to keep up the buildings. Municipalities not just in Metropolitan Toronto are worried, but outside of Metro. They're worried about the additional costs they're going to pick up for long-term care, for housing, and they are also worried about welfare because there will indeed be another recession, as there has been every five to seven years, and people will face greater costs.

Mike Harris says, "Don't worry, we'll help you out when the time comes." Nobody trusts Mike Harris, the Premier of this province, to help them out when the next recession comes about and they're facing bigger bills on housing, long-term care and welfare, and they now have transportation. Outside of Toronto and Metro the subsidy to transportation by the province is very high, somewhere in the nature of 70%, 80%, depending on different communities. They know they're going to pick up that cost. Libraries have been passed on to the municipalities. All the responsibilities that properly should remain in the hands of the province have been passed on.

1740

The government has done other calculations, and I will get to them, but they've also added market value assessment or a combination of the two. We're not quite clear yet which the minister thinks he's got to offer here in Ontario. But we have market value assessment introduced in Ontario, and that is going to raise people's property taxes to begin with. Without this dumping of other additional things, people in Metropolitan Toronto, Etobicoke, where the Speaker lives, and other places of this metropolitan place are going face a tax hike without having to get the additional costs that will come as a result of the dumping of all these other services.

In my riding 90% of the people in the heart of downtown are going to get a tax increase, in my area of the

city, right in the heart of downtown. That's what makes us different. It makes us different here in the city of Toronto because we are able to keep a big residential component in the heart of Toronto. We do that because, by and large, people like to live downtown. I tell you this: Market value assessment here in Metro is going to hurt a lot of people. They're going to face a property tax hike just with that action alone. Add to that long-term care and welfare and housing, transportation, libraries and the like and people know they're going to get a tax increase. Gilles Pouliot knows that; others know this. I think many people are beginning to know that even on the other side, because their constituents are beginning to worry about that.

Add to that the fact that this government says, "We're eliminating the business occupancy tax." That's \$1.2 billion. It's got to be made up somehow. The municipalities have to make up \$1.2 billion. Mr Ernie Eves said: "That's not a problem. The municipalities will have to deal with that." How do they deal with that? Somebody has to pay, and either the residential sector has to pay or the other businesses that own those properties will have to pick up the \$1.2 billion of the business occupancy tax. That wasn't figured in; that was not calculated in the figures. Mr Speaker, I'm not sure that some of the members heard: \$1.2 billion has to be made up when they get rid of the business occupancy tax. It's a problem.

They have another feature in there called the tax differential between the condos and the residential sector, the rental buildings. There is a very big differential between the two. In fact, the rate that rental buildings are paying is four times higher than the condominiums. So Mike Harris says: "That's okay. We will now introduce enabling legislation that will permit municipalities to deal with that tax differential." That might be all right for Ernie Eves and Mike Harris to do but it's not all right for the municipalities. They know if they do that, that difference has to be made up somehow, that somebody is going to have to pay that difference, that someone is going to have to pay. Property taxes will still be high for one group or another or for most groups.

What have you added, as a summary that is important for people to understand? You've taken \$5.4 billion out of education and you have added an equivalent amount of welfare and transportation and housing and long-term care and libraries and so on. Add to that the additional costs of welfare in the next recession; add to that the long-term-care costs of many seniors, most of you and others who are coming on board in the next five or 10 years; add to that actual value assessment in Metropolitan Toronto in particular and across the province; add to that the \$1.2 billion of the business occupancy tax and the elimination of the tax differential between the rental buildings and the condominiums, and you've got a big property tax bill on your hands.

You can either believe Mike Harris on this, the Premier, or believe those who are crunching the other numbers on the other side. But that's okay. A lawyer from the other side said you can believe Mike Harris or you can believe us. You just have to trust your own instincts. You, as an electorate out there, have to trust your own instincts. Do you believe Mike Harris when he



says, "You're getting a tax break from us"? He might be giving you a tax break if you're wealthy through the income tax cut, but I tell you this, you are not getting a property tax break from the dumping of this bill, of these measures, on to municipalities.

I have to tell you, Mr Lawyer on the other side, people are going to have to swallow a big horse pill to believe you. It is a big horse pill that people in Ontario have to swallow to believe you. From my touring of the province on a variety of issues, including rent control, people are concerned about what you're doing and rightfully so. They no longer believe this government in terms of the steps that you are now venturing in.

Some people across Ontario were not unhappy when you attacked the poor through welfare. They probably thought that was a good thing. Many of us disagree with that, but some of your supporters thought that was great. Finally we have a government that's going to be autocratic enough to be able to cut the services and the benefits of people who are the lowest and poorest of our members in society. Some were happy you did that. I was completely against that and I believe that when you attack the most vulnerable people, you are doing a disservice to yourselves and our society.

Some did not mind your attack on the Employment Equity Act that we had and you repealed. You made a lot of people happy about that, because all of you before the election made it appear that people of colour were getting the jobs because of employment equity. White people said to themselves, "It isn't unemployment that's creating the problem; it's the fact that employment equity is giving jobs to people of colour," and that was a distortion of the truth. But it worked for a lot of people. Then you gave them an income tax cut and people loved that. You told them, "Finally I'm going to give you a tax break. You deserve it. You've been paying too much," and many liked that. That was a good, healthy pill that you gave them.

But when you give them this other horse pill to swallow, this other horse bill — bill and pill — about dumping all of this other stuff on the property taxpayer, I tell you, you are going too far. You have reached a threshold of reasonability that most people will not stand for. You have permitted for a democracy to grow in Ontario, especially Metro, because of the malodorous actions and policies of this government, and I thank you for that.

I thank you because people needed a reason to get involved and you have given them a reason to be involved. When governments go too far with their policies, you then have to confront an electorate that's prepared to attack you and defend themselves and defend their communities because the amalgamation of their cities in their minds and mine is an ice pick in the heart of Metropolitan Toronto, and with the dumping of these services on to Metro in particular, it's worse.

With the amalgamation of boards of education, which is the real disguise to get \$500 million out of Metro, people in the education sector are realizing all of this is a front to take money out of Metro, and you're doing it. Your attack on trustees which your Reform public loves is but a disguise to get to the \$500 million from Metro that you desperately need to fund that misguided income tax cut.

1750

People involved in education understand that the real fight here is not the fact that you have just assaulted trustees in all of the province, that the real fight is not just around amalgamation, because they all know the savings of that are very little, if any. In fact, we're not even sure there has been any study that shows that amalgamating a few boards is going to be any less costly. We don't know. That is the claim you make, but no study that I've seen shows there will be savings.

People are beginning to understand what this is all about. They are sorting out the garbage you are espousing, which is to say that trustees are the enemy, and because we have 123 boards, that is the enemy we need to attack. They're understanding the separation of that versus the fact that this government needs to get out of the educational system approximately \$1.2 billion if not close to \$2 billion, as I argue.

You're going to have to deal with that issue because you've made a promise not to cut one cent from education, which you've already broken, but you need more money than the \$400 million or close to \$800 million you've taken out of the educational system. You need more money than that, so you are devising a way to assault teachers as well, because that is one of the areas you have to get to to get money, but you will make it appear that this is not an assault on teachers or students, that it's really an assault on non-classroom education. From my long years as a trustee and teacher, the few dollars that are left outside of the classroom all connect to the classroom. They are all related to classroom education.

You might smile and talk gleefully about how smug you appear and how right you appear in your direction, but people are learning that what we have in our hands is an autocracy, a government that behaves as if there is no democracy, a government that has decided to operate as if there were no people out there who would oppose them, a government that has decided they don't need to listen to the public, and up until a couple of weeks ago Mike Harris said he wasn't going to listen to anybody and Monsieur Leach said he wasn't going to listen to anybody either. Then Mike Harris came back a couple of days ago and he said: "Oh, we had it all wrong. We are going to listen. We are going to allow for the referendum to take place. But," he added, "we are not backing down."

My deduction from this statement is that he pretends or he is giving the illusion that he's going to listen to people through the referendum, but he says, "We are not backing down," which leads me to believe that this man, this government, have no respect for the democratic process, that they will forge ahead in their misguided policies no matter what the people of Metropolitan Toronto and other places have to say.

What do I urge people to do? I urge people, those who are listening, like the Speaker is listening intently, I can tell, to write in to the minister and to the Premier and other ministers who might have an interest in this, through a letter signed by you, but on the front page write "Private and Confidential" so the minister gets it in his little hands and Mike Harris gets it in his little hands.



If you don't write "Private and Confidential" on that letter, it's going to go through the bureaucracy and it will take four years to be able to get a response to your letter. So write a letter "Private and Confidential." Please do that.

Sign those petitions and meet with your Conservative members. Meet with them. Look them in the eye as you tell them and as you raise your points and wait for their answers. You want to look them in the eyes as they tell you why they think what they're doing is right. Don't phone them, simply. It isn't good enough. Writing is good but meeting with your MPPs is more important than that.

Tonight there is an important meeting at 56 Queen Street East. It is going to be a mega-meeting against the madness of the amalgamation of Metropolitan Toronto and I urge everybody watching to come down; it's at 7:30 tonight. Last week there were 1,500 people. I wager that, because I see democracy growing, there are going to be 2,500 in that church. The space is not big enough to hold the people. I tell you, they're going to be overflowing and it's going to get bigger. Next week we're likely to see those numbers growing yet again, to 3,500.

Democracy has a way of growing and Mike Harris cannot but listen, even though he pretends that he will not. He will listen, so keep up the pressure, meet with the Conservative members across Ontario and let them know what you think.

**The Speaker:** Questions, comments?

**Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South):** I want to thank the honourable member for Fort York for his comments today and I want to assure you, Mr Speaker, and through you the audience at home, that this is a government that does respect democracy, which is precisely why we are quite encouraged that the debate is going on today. Quite frankly, we are looking forward to the public hearings, which we always said, and which the Premier and Minister Leach always said, would be part and parcel of the ongoing discussion on how to create a government within Metropolitan Toronto that will service the needs of the community and the citizens within Metropolitan Toronto in a way which is sustainable, which is respectable and which respects accountability.

There are those who disagree with us. The opposition quite obviously has a different point of view, and I certainly respect that and look forward to their point of view at the public hearings, but to suggest that we are denying a democracy not only calls into question the public hearing process, which we are very much committed to, but also lends credence to the types of things that are going on within the six cities at present.

Once again, I feel compelled to draw to your attention the fact that the six cities claim that they are doing a series of referendums when in fact it is nothing more than a glorified and expensive \$2.7-million public opinion poll. If one reads the Toronto Star today, one finds out how the six cities are starting to fund only one side of the issue, and I repeat, only one side of the issue: \$4,000 is going to Dragon Times Productions so that "quite respectable street artists and musicians" can do some sort of street theatre to explain the position of the anti-

unified-city proposals. If that's how they want to spend taxpayers' money, I want no part of it.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Let me just say I find this whole debate about public hearings very interesting. Let me first of all say that I'm a total believer in the public hearing process, but I think as well that public hearings ought to be meaningful. It seems to me, just from having been in this House for the last year and a half or so, that the public hearing process we've set up here really isn't all that meaningful.

Let's face facts and let's tell the people of Ontario exactly where we're at. If you have public hearings after a bill has had second reading, when we've taken probably anywhere from two or three days to five or six, seven days to stake out our positions here as to how we stand on the bills that are presented to us, both from the government side and from the opposition side, then really the public hearing process isn't all that meaningful.

It seems to me that the public hearing process is much more meaningful if you do it at the front of the exercise, before people stake out their positions on it. It would be akin to a municipality having a public hearing process, for example, by a planning committee on a matter that might be rezoning etc after the council of that municipality, which is going to be the ultimate decider, had already staked out its position as to where it stood on that particular issue. That's one problem I have a real difficulty with, the whole public hearings process.

Maybe what we ought to do in this House at some point of time is take a look at our roles to make sure that the public hearings are meaningful and do something about it before second reading.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** You can't do it that way.

**Mr Gerretsen:** You may not be able to do that right now, but I'm sure that the rules can be modified to accommodate that.

The other issue the people of Ontario should not lose sight of is the fact that this whole amalgamation and annexation issue is closely related to the dumping of social services on municipalities. As I've already indicated in the case of my particular city, our city hall staff has indicated that it's going to cost \$23 million more under the new proposed system.

**1800**

**Mr Pouliot:** I've learned a lot through the remarks, very timely indeed, and insightful, of the member for Dovercourt and the member for Fort York.

I want to share with you that I couldn't help but notice the irony or maybe the cynicism of the member for Brampton South, who felt the need to remind the House that "We respect democracy." How profound. Must you read like the scripture and remind yourself to convey, to preach to others? What the opposition, our party, is asking for, through the voices of my two distinguished colleagues, is six real weeks of hearings, because what's happening here is not revenue-neutral. This is sorcery.

On the one hand the government says, "You shall save the education portion on your tax bill," yet on the other hand they will go at the very heart of social programs and say: "The population is getting older. You take it. You pay. If you can't, you do without. You take the

policing," or you take it away. The list goes on and on. It's not revenue-neutral. It's the closest cousin to hypocrisy, and they're downloading on municipalities — Mr Speaker, I know that you are very alert, sir.

**The Speaker:** I'm alert enough to know that you can't say that. I want to ask that you withdraw.

**Mr Pouliot:** Mr Speaker, I was referring to the cousin, not to the government, but I will withdraw anyway.

Suffice it to say that this kind of façade, this thinly veiled, deliberate and systematic —

**The Speaker:** Thank you very much.

**Mr Hastings:** I'd like to pick up on the theme of the member for Lake Nipigon, talking about a veil. I would think that you would only want to use a veil in the more mystic, religious experience or context. We do not use a veil on this side at all. What you see is what you get.

**Mr Pouliot:** Yes, what I see is what I get.

**Mr Hastings:** Absolutely. Good-looking, articulate, sophisticated.

Let's get back to the actual business case that we're dealing with here today. I would like to go back to some of the remarks of the member for Kingston and The Islands when he was talking about wishing we could have a really good public hearings consultation process.

**The Speaker:** The member for Etobicoke-Rexdale, you're commenting on the interventions offered up by the members for Fort York and Dovercourt.

**Mr Hastings:** I'm completely ignoring them, though, Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Then you can't participate in questions and comments.

**Mr Hastings:** I'm beginning to wonder about this Speaker.

**The Speaker:** That is not a new rule; it's a rule that's been around for quite a while.

**Mr Hastings:** Are you going to allow the existing time that you've utilized on my 18 seconds? That's not fair —

**The Speaker:** No, I'm not.

**Mr Hastings:** Incredible, but what would you expect?

Let's get back to the wish or the hope for public consultation and hearings. You're going to get many weeks, but to the opposition: We could be doing this sooner, but over the last two weeks, since we arrived back here on January 13, I haven't seen a lot of substantial cooperation in terms of actually getting this bill into committee.

**Mr Wildman:** Why should we be cooperating?

**Mr Hastings:** Exactly, see?

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**Mr Silipo:** Speaker, I know that you would not want me to belabour this point, given the time, so I just want to say, on behalf of the member for Fort York and myself, that we always appreciate responses. Even though the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale may not want to respond to us or listen to us, he may want to ignore us, he won't be able to ignore the people out there.

I want to say to the member for Brampton South that I'm glad he's looking forward to the public hearings. I hope he will listen to what we're going to hear during the public hearings, because what he will hear is virtual opposition to what his government is doing, and this from someone who prides himself — and I know he's very genuine — on his strong beliefs about the need for a referendum law in this province.

If he sees what is going on in Metropolitan Toronto as simply a glorified public opinion poll, then I say to the member opposite, look again, because you're missing the point. You're missing the point of citizens and local governments up in arms against a government that's spending \$8 million advertising its agenda. There's hardly a one-sided advertising campaign going on. If there is, it's in favour of the government, not in favour of those opposed to the megacity. I want to say to you that what is going on is a real outrage being expressed by the governments and the people in Metropolitan Toronto against what Mike Harris's government is doing.

We can have hearings and we will have some hearings — we already know you've agreed to that — but there's a very big difference between the nine days of hearings that your House leader has offered up so far and the weeks of hearings we believe need to be there in order to really hear the people who want to speak, in order to really listen to what people have to say on this very important issue. We will see over the next few days the test of this government in terms of whether you really believe in democracy. So far you haven't shown that you do.

**The Speaker:** It now being past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1807.*



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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 28 January 1997

Mardi 28 janvier 1997



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 28 January 1997

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 28 janvier 1997

*The House met at 1332.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** I want to address my remarks today directly to the Minister of Northern Development, who'll be the guest speaker at the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce annual meeting Wednesday in Thunder Bay.

Last week the minister came to northern Ontario to sell us on the merits of dumping new financial responsibilities on northern municipalities. Although the minister acknowledged that northern communities will have higher costs than revenues when these sweeping reforms come into place, he tried to persuade the northern media that special consideration was being given to our communities through a northern investment strategy designed to deal with the inequities in the north because of the clearly higher service costs we face.

The problem: There was and is no northern investment strategy. The minister himself, when pressed, referred to a strategy that "will eventually happen," that he "assumed" would happen. The minister's staff the next day were quoted as saying they weren't sure there would be something distinct for the north.

Despite the minister's acknowledgement of our higher costs in the north, he admitted that we'll simply be competing for the same pot of money that the rest of the province's municipalities will be fighting over, a pot of money that, we now learn from the Premier, the municipalities may have to cofund.

All of us concerned with those massive restructuring changes are terribly concerned about them, and the minister and I can certainly disagree over the effects of these reforms, but the minister should not insult all of us in the north by inventing a northern-specific angle that simply does not exist. These are serious issues we're facing, and we need the facts and a minister who will deliver on a commitment he's publicly made.

### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Down in Niagara people are outraged, incensed and, I tell you, fearful as well about the attack this government is posing on health care in Niagara region. Among the hospitals to be shut down by Harris and this government are the Hotel Dieu and the Port Colborne General, and I tell you, they're not Mike Harris's hospitals to shut down. These

hospitals, like hospitals across Niagara region, were built brick by brick by working people and retirees, as they donated money by subscription from their paycheques, \$5 and \$10 a week, money they couldn't afford at the time but money that they were prepared to invest in health care in their community so that their children and grandchildren could enjoy the benefits of a universal health care system.

Let me tell you, the folks in Niagara know what the shutdown of Hotel Dieu and Port Colborne General means. It's going to mean reduced access to emergency services. It's going to mean people dying on their way to an emergency room outside of their community. It means reduced access to intensive care unit beds. It means reduced access to operating room facilities. It means reduced access to hospital beds. It means reduced funding to deliver health care services. It means reduced choice for health care services. It means increased donations required for reduced access to care, and there's been no assessment of how quality will be affected.

I tell you, this government is not going to be tolerated in Niagara region. As it continues to attack and dismantle health care in Niagara, the people of Niagara are fighting back by the thousands.

## LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre):** More and more of my constituents are contacting me to say they support the many dramatic and positive changes the government is making to the public sector in Ontario. However, my constituents are also wondering, as I am, where the leader of the official opposition stands. It is not clear where he stands on the government's initiatives, nor is it clear why he has not offered any constructive alternatives of his own.

In an editorial on January 12, the Toronto Star asked, "Do Liberals, NDPers Have an Alternative?" On January 17, the Toronto Star asked again, "Instead of playing procedural games, why don't opposition members debate the contents of government bills and examine them in legislative committees where witnesses can appear?"

We have seen the Liberals flip-flop on issues. If the leader of the official opposition offered his own views on today's issues, the flip-flops would be painfully evident. The Leader of the Opposition hasn't given an alternative to the reform we have introduced, but he has repeatedly stated that he sees the need to restructure and downsize government, to reduce the number of school boards and to achieve economies in government spending wherever possible. He has even said that if he becomes Premier after the Harris government's tax cut is fully imple-



mented, he will not attempt to reverse the changes. He has also said he would not reverse a unified Toronto.

I must ask, what exactly is the opposition leader's position? Does he have a plan? Has he thought of ways of doing things better for less? Does he truly want to give taxpayers a break?

#### MINISTRY OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STAFF

**Mr Robert Chiarelli (Ottawa West):** This government's assault on defenceless children continues, this time in the justice system. According to the *Law Times*, the axe is about to fall on up to 20 civil lawyers working in the Attorney General's crown law office, including seven lawyers whose job it is to take legal action against defaulting payors of child support.

This government cannot even pay out support cheques voluntarily received, to say nothing about pursuing people who aren't paying, and now they plan to erode enforcement even further. The government is firing efficient and capable staff lawyers and is replacing them with commissioned bill collectors and ad hoc freelance lawyers, which not only ends up costing the taxpayers more but will reduce the quality of service in attempting to protect the interests of children.

This stands as another repugnant example of poor planning and government incompetence. What's happening with family support administration in Ontario is symptomatic of the widespread and unnecessary chaos this government is inflicting on our legal system. As Chief Justice Roy McMurtry recently charged in unprecedented criticism of the Attorney General, Ontario's justice system is headed for total breakdown unless the effect of government cuts and inaction is remedied.

We say shame on the Attorney General for imposing a slash-and-burn policy on the Ontario justice system, especially on our children.

1340

#### NORTHERN ONTARIO

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** Last week, the Minister of Northern Development and Mines came to Sault Ste Marie to make an announcement. That announcement was that this government had absolutely no industrial strategy for northern Ontario.

He also, in that announcement, told the communities and people of the north that if, in implementing this government's strategy, they find that taxes have to be raised and services are diminished, they should blame the municipal leaders and shunned any responsibility for the damage that is going to be incurred. This is an example of the contempt in which this government holds communities and community leaders across this province. But did it surprise any of us? Not at all, because the track record of this minister and his government has been at best dismal and at worst destructive.

They have dismantled the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. The vehicle that's left to administer community economic development, the northern Ontario heritage fund, has been literally dormant; we haven't seen a thing. They've been in power now for a year and a half, they've been making promises

to northern Ontario for a year and a half, and they haven't spent a penny, not one cent, out of that fund on anything to help the people of northern Ontario as they deal with the very devastating decisions that have been made and done to us over the last year and a half.

#### SOCIAL, COMMUNITY HEALTH AND HOUSING SERVICES

**Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk):** I wish to address smarter government and less spending. Our government is determined to make this a reality in the province of Ontario. Previous provincial governments talked about making necessary changes to allow taxpayers to get better value for their hard-earned dollars. They never followed through. Our government has.

Simply put, where it makes sense for the province to assume responsibility, we have; where it makes sense for municipalities to deliver services, we've made that decision; and where it makes sense for the province and municipalities to share in the funding and in the provision of services, we are ready to fund our portion.

It's funny, even the Ontario Liberal leader has admitted that change is needed. He stated in August 1996, "Ontarians are telling us to retool government, to make it more efficient and to concentrate on what it should be doing and doing it well."

I would like to suggest that his idea, which we're implementing, is being very well received. For example, Ron Carther, president of the Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber of Commerce, stated on January 17, 1997: "It's clear that what the government is doing is stepping back and looking at the fundamental changes in the way we govern. The purpose behind this is to flatten the organization clearly and provide greater value for taxpayers in the province."

Overall, our plan is one that will be more responsive to local needs.

#### GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** Regardless of a ruling made by the Speaker in this House which was unprecedented in Ontario's history — this government was held in contempt of the Legislature for its ad campaign — yet even today the ruling by the Speaker has not dampened the spirit of the Conservative government in continuing to press ahead with Mike Harris ads throughout Ontario.

I'd like to remind the people of Ontario that every time we see the face of Mike Harris in our living rooms, that is hard-earned taxpayers' money paying for those ads, whether it's about education — please remember the effect on the classroom, that millions of dollars being spent by the Conservative government, your taxpayers' money, is going to feed the ego of Mike Harris.

Instead of listening to the people and realizing what priorities should be, we are closing hospitals thanks to Mike Harris. We lay off nurses thanks to Mike Harris. Today, Frank Bagatto, executive director of Hotel Dieu Hospital in Windsor, announces that Windsor and Essex county is underfunded by \$122 per capita compared to the Ontario average. And what do we see in our living



rooms? Mike Harris spending your taxpayers' money on a television campaign. I ask the PC Party of Ontario to reimburse Ontario's citizens for every dollar that it is wasting.

### PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATION

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** It's in this type of atmosphere that I wish to convey the anxiety shared by social services students at Confederation College.

As you are well aware, the government has recently enacted legislation to sanctify, to say, "If you have a BA or an MA you will be recognized as a professional, but if you don't, if you're one of the many more thousands of people who place the welfare of others ahead of your own — the welfare of your family, that of your community, that of the province of Ontario — well, we have little use for you, because by way of regulation we shall dictate, if you wish, by way of recognition for some but more importantly the lack of recognition for others."

The people who don't have the BA, the people who don't have the master's degree in social science, collectively, unanimously, wish to have a chance to be like the others, for they perform the same work, quite often for fewer dollars.

Today they share anxiety, and I share their anxiety. Let's give them a chance to exist.

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** I rise in the House today in response to my many constituents in the riding of Scarborough Centre who have called my constituency office to congratulate this government with respect to Bill 103, the City of Toronto Act.

This sensible and overdue initiative acknowledges the need to modernize Toronto's political and economic structures. Businesses, especially small businesses, are excited about the prospect of a strong, united Toronto that will continue to be the growth engine of Ontario.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Could the members for Lake Nipigon and Oriole come to order, please.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** I appreciate that, but I can't hear the member for Scarborough Centre.

**Mr Newman:** Thank you, Speaker. This is what Rachelle Wood of the Ontario Restaurant Association has to say: "Our members, especially small business operators, are looking for coordination. They don't want a patchwork of bylaws across municipalities," and they think Bill 103 is a great idea; they support it.

This proposed initiative will result in better services at lower costs for the people of Toronto. This government has shown leadership and resolve in reversing the tax-and-spend policies of previous provincial and municipal governments. To those municipal politicians who are currently engaged in a costly campaign to save their own jobs, I say: "Stop wasting taxpayers' dollars and accept that the people of Metro Toronto and Ontario are fed up with spendthrift politicians and governments concerned only with preserving the status quo."

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** I know the member for Oakwood is standing on a point of privilege. Let me just see if there are ministry statements. I'd rather get through that before we deal with it. Ministry statements? None? Okay, point of privilege, the member for Oakwood.

### GOVERNMENT FAXES

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** Mr Speaker, as you know, last week you ruled that the pamphlet distributed by the Minister of Municipal Affairs was in contempt of the Legislature —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. I think what we must do first off is clear that exactly up, if you could take your seat. I would ask the opposition, at least when dealing with myself, that you use that in fact I didn't find the minister in contempt of the Legislature; I found a prima facie case of contempt and there is a big difference.

**Mr Colle:** Mr Speaker, there was a prima facie case established of the minister being in contempt of the Legislature. As you know, Mr Speaker, your concern was that the wording in the pamphlet seemed to assume in colloquial language that the legislation, megacity, Bill 103, was a done deal.

It seems that the government and the ministry are continuing on the same path of assuming that this bill will be passed no matter what happens. I'll point to a communication that's come out of the faxes that are coming from this government and I'll read you a line from one of these faxes dated January 27. This is four days after your ruling and it's a question-and-answer thing.

It says "Who Does What." The question is, "Metro officials are now saying it will take many years to fully amalgamate Toronto — much longer than you have suggested." The answer is, "The new united Toronto will be in place by January 1998." So here they are again establishing that this is a done deal. No matter what happens, January 1, 1998, this new united Toronto megacity will be in place.

I bring this to your attention again, Mr Speaker, and that this minister and this government are again in contempt of the Legislature and the people of Ontario.

1350

**The Speaker:** It would be very helpful if you could send that down to the table.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Is this the same point of privilege? Yes? Member for Algoma.

**Mr Wildman:** It's similar and it relates to the same matter. In regard to the particular document that the member for Oakwood referred to, I have a copy of a similar document which says, "Do the Math — Metro Taxpayers Win." There is no cover page to say who this was sent from. It says at the top, "From PGOO." I don't know what that means, whether it means provincial government of Ontario or whatever, but "PGOO."

I would also bring to your attention that when I was visiting Wawa in my constituency on Saturday, a representative of the teachers from Sir James Dunn Public



School came to see me and presented me with a couple of other documents entitled "Who Does What," which were faxed to the school, one on January 16 and another on January 22, again with no cover page, not saying who they were from. All it says at the top is "From GMS." I couldn't understand what "GMS" might be until I did some investigating and came to the conclusion that this must be government members services. This deals with property assessment, the farm tax credit, red tape and so on.

Speaker, what I want to point out to you also is that I heard this morning on CBC Radio a report that included some quotes from Mr Paul Rhodes, the senior media adviser to the Premier in the Premier's office. In that media report Mr Rhodes acknowledged that he was responsible for this, what was referred to as a mass faxing program, and he indicated that he didn't know why there were no covering pages, which I understand are a requirement of the CRTC, the federal regulating body, and why it didn't say from whom they originated, but he said he was going to investigate it. He said that the government, or he, had contracted out this mass faxing program and that he and other members of the government, the Premier's office and so on, didn't have any control over it, but he was going to look into why, apparently, this private firm to which they had contracted out this faxing program hadn't complied with the CRTC regulations.

I refer you to the transcript of the report. It says: "An official of the CRTC says the Conservative faxes appear to break them," meaning the federal regulations. "They have to include the name of the sender along with the address and phone number."

For the life of me, I don't know why the government would want to fax this material to Sir James Dunn Public School in Wawa. These were done late in the evening on both the days I mentioned; no covering pages, not saying who they were from and simply saying "From GMS." If it is the government members service, then what Mr Rhodes said on the radio this morning appears not to be accurate; these were not sent out by some private firm contracted to do it but by the government members services, the caucus services, the MPPs services, and they were sent out from a room here in this building —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Government House leader.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, I haven't had the opportunity to see the pieces of correspondence alluded to by the members opposite, but my suspicion is that these are pieces of correspondence coming out of government services and I don't believe those pieces of correspondence were the subject of your ruling. I believe the subject of your ruling pertained to correspondence coming out of the government, coming out of the ministry. I think this is a separate piece of literature, not coming out of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, not coming out of any other particular ministry, but indeed coming out of government services.

Notwithstanding that, Mr Speaker, I've given my undertaking, and yesterday reiterated, to the House leader's office to contact all the ministries to ensure that

your ruling is abided by. In this particular case, if it comes out of government services, I'd submit that it is a different form of communication, but notwithstanding that, we will have a look at it.

**Mr Wildman:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: There is not an indication that this comes out of government services. I want to make the point that I was not raising this in regard to your ruling last week. I was raising it as a separate matter. It seems to me that if this was sent out by the government members services, the Tory caucus, it was sent out apparently in contravention of the federal regulations, which in my view calls this place into disrepute and therefore is a matter of privilege.

**The Speaker:** The member for St Catharines.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** The issue is exactly this: The government, through its members services, can put out whatever it sees fit, I suppose. The issue was that this seemed to be disguised as coming from some impartial source. I think the problem, for my friend the Minister of Environment who is wondering about this, is that it's not identified where it comes from. It looks like it's just some citizen who wants to be fair about things in putting these matters out. I think that's what we're looking at, that it's in violation of the CRTC regulations, and that's where the government in this case is in trouble, I believe.

**Hon David Johnson:** This is a complete stretch. I don't know if the opposition members are suggesting that you now rule on behalf of the CRTC. I congratulate you on your new appointment and your broader responsibilities.

These are not communications, as I understand it, coming out of the ministries. They do not conflict, as I understand it, with your previous ruling. There's no attempt to disguise anything here. As I understand it, it's legitimate communications from members' offices, as the Liberal Party would do, as the NDP would do. To suggest that somehow you should rule on behalf of the CRTC I think is ludicrous.

**The Speaker:** Leader of the third party on a point of —

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: The government can try to pass this off as trivial. The government can try to say that federal regulations governing communications don't matter, but I think they do matter, and I think they matter for this House. Each and every one of us has the responsibility to obey the law when we try to use government money or taxpayers' money to communicate with people across this province.

My point is this, and I want you to listen carefully, Speaker: If, as we believe, these are coming out of government members services, GMS, and government members services for whatever reason, and we can speculate as to the reasons, doesn't put a covering page on it, doesn't want people to know that they're coming from government members services, want people to think this is somehow spontaneous information, third-party validation of the government's position, the government is breaching those federal regulations. I believe that brings all of us in this Legislature into disrepute. I



believe it reflects on all of us and I think it affects all of our privileges, and that needs to be acknowledged.

Second, I think there is something seriously wrong when the government or government members try to communicate a message to the public and then try to disguise that it is the government members who are communicating that by not putting a cover page on the fax. It's as if the government is trying to use government services, government caucus services, to communicate a political message to the public and then say, "Oh, it's a third-party message; we had nothing to do with it." That in my mind borders on deception, and that in my mind borders on contempt for this House once again and, more importantly, contempt for the people of this province.

1400

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** The body which the opposition are referring to is the caucus research group. That is funded by this Legislative Assembly. I don't have any interest in controlling what the member for Ottawa East sends out to his constituents. I don't have any interest in controlling what the Liberal caucus sends out to their particular constituents. Quite frankly, it's none of my business. It is their business, it is their research budget, and I'm sure that they would be very angry if we started, as a political party, to interfere with what they said or how they said something or what they said.

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** It is deceitful not to let people know who is sending them that stuff.

**The Speaker:** Member for Oriole.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** Quite frankly, it contravenes all of the privileges which I have as a member of this political party. The objection contravenes my right to communicate with people the way I should do.

**Mrs Caplan:** You have no right to break the law.

**The Speaker:** Order. Member for Oriole, come to order.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** If I should break the law, or anybody should break the law, then let the appropriate enforcement authorities take action.

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** Just say where it comes from, Norm, that's all. Then it will be legal.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** But it has nothing to do with these people over here as to what I say or what I don't say. In fact, I find it objectionable that another MPP in this place should object to how I phrase something, how I present something. I have never heard that objection in the 20 years I've been in this Legislature, that any member of any party has ever said that another party is presenting material in one way or the other. I think they're wrong. I think they're wrong in terms of attacking the long-term privileges of members of this House by putting this objection forward.

**The Speaker:** I've got to say, just quickly, I think I've basically heard all there is to hear on this particular point of order. Now I see that there's obviously interest in putting some more on the record. I would ask that you put on the record, please, what hasn't been stated, rather than simply reiterating and getting into a debate about whether it's right or wrong.

**Mr Hampton:** Just to be clear, we've got a definition here and we've got the problem defined. No one objects

to government members wanting to communicate with their constituents or wanting to communicate with the citizens of Ontario at large. The problem here is that I believe the government has clearly breached federal communications laws, and I believe, at the very least, you should apologize for that. I believe that by doing that they have brought this House into disrepute —

**The Speaker:** With respect to the leader of the third party —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Government members, please. With due respect, I think you made those points very well and very clearly earlier on, and I appreciate that. Any other point? The member for St Catharines.

**Mr Bradley:** A brief point here because I just want to clarify. My friend the Minister of Environment and Energy may have misinterpreted it. The issue is that you did not identify where it came from. What you put out as a caucus is your business, but you must identify where it comes from so you don't pretend it's coming from somewhere else.

**The Speaker:** The member for Beaches-Woodbine.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Very quickly on this point, Mr Speaker, we will be sending you copies of the documents that we have raised and referred to. I wanted to make sure that in all of the arguments you didn't miss the point that some of those documents are headed "GMS," which we believe refers to government members services. In fact, we're asking you to determine whether or not that is the case. And one of the documents — same document but obviously faxed from a different source — is headed "PGOO," which we believe stands for provincial government of Ontario.

It may be in your ruling that you would find products of caucus services to fall under the purview of the Board of Internal Economy. You have ruled in that vein before and we understand that may be the case. We raise the question with you, when it appears that a prima facie case could be made that there's been a contravention of federal legislation by a caucus, what actions or remedies are available to members of the Legislature. But beyond that, if one of the documents has been faxed out by the provincial government of Ontario, presumably through the Premier's office, that raises it to a different purview and it becomes a matter of this House. We would ask you to take that into consideration.

**The Speaker:** Yes, and actually in a lot of respects that is in fact what I was going to surmise with respect to the government services. I will investigate it and I will report back, but let us be clear: On a number of occasions I have ruled that the Board of Internal Economy is the proper place to hear government services issues. With respect to the province of — I've not heard this particular acronym myself, so I don't know and I will certainly review that one.

As far as federal laws being broken and so on and so forth, I will take it back but I can't offer you much comfort with respect to dealing with those particular rules and legalities. Having said that, I will take the time to review it. But again let us be clear: I have ruled in the past that these issues through government services, members services, properly and duly should be put before



the Board of Internal Economy. You all have representation there, we all have representation there and that's where I think they should in fact be.

### SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Now I want to move on. On January 16, 1997, the member for Dovercourt, Mr Silipo, rose on a question of privilege concerning the government's alleged appointment of three individuals to a board of trustees purportedly pursuant to a bill that had neither been passed by the House nor received royal assent. That, on the face of it, was in fact the basis for his point of order.

I appears the essential concern for the member for Dovercourt was not that the bill contained a provision that would give retroactive effect to certain clauses in the bill but rather that the government was acting as if the clauses containing the retroactive provisions were already law. Thus the member for Dovercourt was of the view that the government could act on the clauses containing the retroactive provisions only after, and not before, the bill containing the clauses had in fact become law. I think I've summarized it fairly accurately.

Then yesterday the member for Fort William, Mrs McLeod, rose on a question of privilege to express somewhat similar concerns about a separate incident. The member was concerned about the government's intention to appoint two named individuals to the Education Improvement Commission, a body whose existence hinged on the passage of a bill that had yet to receive second reading. The member indicated that the government's actions amounted to contempt. I am paraphrasing, but I think that was fundamentally the point of privilege. The government House leader spoke to the concerns raised by the member for Fort William yesterday as well.

I did in fact do some research on both these particular cases and previous precedents that had been ruled on by previous Speakers. In my research I came across a December 20, 1989, ruling, which seems very applicable, dealing with a member's concerns that public servants were acting upon legislation that had not yet passed all the steps in the legislative process. In that ruling Speaker Edighoffer stated as follows, at page 273 of the Journals for that day:

"It is perfectly valid for the public service to proceed with plans based on a bill that is already in the system in order to be able to act swiftly, once that bill becomes law. It goes without saying that if the bill is amended during the legislative process," and I think this is the important part that needs to be dealt with in the ones brought forward, "then the public service must take note and act accordingly."

It seems to me that the thrust of this ruling can fairly encompass the matters raised by the member for Dovercourt and the member for Fort William; that is, that a government may take certain actions in preparation for the possibility that a bill will pass through the Legislative process, that they may act and take reasonable direction to enforce that.

But I do not think the same state of affairs, as it presently exists with respect to those two matters, has

developed to the point that a prima facie case has been established on the submissions made by the member for Dovercourt and the member for Fort William, simply because if they do in fact act, as they've done in this case and as in the case in 1989, and the bill is amended or changed, it would then be incumbent on the government to amend and change the action they've taken so that it conforms to the actual legislation that was passed. It doesn't create a prima facie case of contempt. It may cause a problem for the government at a later date if their bill is amended and they must change their direction at that time.

It may be — I will say this very clearly and I want all members of the House to hear this particular point — there is a legal issue involved in this course of action, however, and the Speaker cannot rule on the legality of the provisions contained in legislation or the actions of a government. These would be matters for the courts to decide.

I thank both members for their points of order and their input, I thank the government House leader, and that will be my ruling.

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### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** I have a series of questions today for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. For a couple of weeks now Ontarians far and wide have been telling you that your plans to dump services on to residential taxpayers are going to lead to dramatic increases in property taxes.

You have taken to calling those who disagree with you whiners. Minister, today we've got another prominent name to add to your list of whiners, that of David Crombie of the Crombie commission. David Crombie is angry because after you hired him to carefully consider this issue and after he came up with the best advice he could offer, you ignored it.

I want to quote what he said in the commission report. He said: "We are unanimous in our view that if there is a choice between placing education or health and welfare on the property tax, it's clearly preferable to continue to rely on the property tax to fund education."

That is what he said, and that is what you've ignored. Minister, is David Crombie a whiner or is he absolutely right when he says of your government, "I don't think there's a soul left standing that actually agrees with them"?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** To the Leader of the Opposition: It's amazing. A couple of weeks ago they were criticizing the government because we were rubber-stamping all of David Crombie's recommendations. Now when we examine the information that has been put forth by Mr Crombie and don't accept it all, they criticize that.

Just what has Mr Crombie recommended? Mr Crombie recommended that social services be delivered at the local level. We agree with that, and that's being done.



*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. I want the opposition to come to order. I want to be able to hear the minister.

**Hon Mr Leach:** Mr Crombie recommended that the province assume 100% of the cost: let the municipality deliver it, and we just sign a cheque and send it out. We don't think so. We agreed that the services should be delivered at the local level, but there is a strong desire to share the cost 50-50 so that both parties can be responsible for their actions.

**Mr McGuinty:** Speaker, you may have heard of the story of the soldier named Ike. Ike always marched in a different direction than all the other soldiers, but his father would beam with great pride and say, "Look, mama, everyone is out of step except Ike." This minister looks at his wrongheaded dumping of services, beams with pride and says, "Look, Ontario, everybody is out of step except me."

Minister, wake up. You're the one who's out of step. The Metro board of trade says that your plans are going to lead to business tax increases in the amount of \$7,900. The Canadian Taxpayers Federation calls it a shell game and confirms that it's going to raise property taxes. Mel Lastman, the latest, says it's going to hike his taxes by 13%.

Minister, don't stand there all alone. Join the rest of Ontario. Join the growing chorus and admit right here and now you've made a mistake.

**Hon Mr Leach:** Again to the Leader of the Opposition: Let's just review what the board of trade has said. The board of trade agrees with amalgamation. They want amalgamation and they state that strongly. The board of trade agrees with property tax reform. They agree that the property tax is a mess and it has to be addressed. They agree that education should come off the property tax. They have agreed with about 90% of the recommendations in the Crombie report. What did they not agree with? They said they had a concern with the municipalities picking up 50% of the cost of social services.

We're aware that social services can be volatile. That is why we have set aside \$700 million to help any municipality that may have difficulties coping with social services in the future. We don't think they're going to have to draw on that, but it's there if they need it.

**Mr McGuinty:** I think it's important to understand the genesis for this mess we have to contend with now. The Premier got the cabinet together and said, "We are in desperate need of coming up with some money for our ill-considered promise to deliver on a tax cut." The minister against education said, "Give me control of education and I'll get you a billion dollars." The Premier then turned to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, Al Leach, and said, "Al, make it happen, and I don't care what the consequences are." That's why we find ourselves in this mess today.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs perverted a good exercise. It was an exercise in disentanglement and he turned it into an exercise in further entanglement.

David Crombie looked at the scheme and said, "It was like it was done on the back of an envelope." Your

government's handpicked head of the hospital restructuring commission said, "It's stupid."

Minister, I couldn't make it more clear: Your dumping of services is wrong; it's going to raise property taxes. Why are you the only person in Ontario, it would seem, who is bent on continuing with this?

**Hon Mr Leach:** It's very obvious why this government wants to continue with it: because we know it's going to end up with major benefits to the taxpayers of Ontario. We know, as the Premier has pointed out on any number of occasions, that after the transition period, between now and about the year 2000, municipalities will be in a position to lower taxes, not to raise taxes. These gloom-and-doomsters across the floor, if they would take a little bit of time and review everything from the ground up, will see that by taking a program that's growing by about 5% a year — education — off the property tax and asking the municipalities to share in social services, a program that's declining, the municipalities are going to end up ahead of the game.

**The Speaker:** New question, leader of the third party.

**Mr McGuinty:** My question is for the same minister. It seems to me that one of the important tests that ought to be applied to government is not so much whether it makes any mistakes, because they all make mistakes, but what it does when it makes a mistake. In particular, does the government plow ahead once it makes a mistake, does it ignore the consequences or does it have the integrity to admit it was wrong and go back to the drawing board?

Minister, it's now clear to everyone watching that you've made a terrible mistake. The evidence against it is overwhelming and irrefutable. Business is against this, social agencies are against this, municipal governments are against this, ratepayer groups are against this. My question to you is this: What are you going to do now? You've made a mistake. Everybody knows about it. Are you going to acknowledge it now, and will you agree to go back to the drawing board?

**Hon Mr Leach:** Obviously if this government had made a mistake we'd reverse it, and if we ever make one we'll do that.

My understanding is that the Liberal Party agreed with taking education off the property tax. Actually they should be congratulated. I think it's been about three weeks in a row that they've held that position, which must set a new record for consistency for that party.

Obviously the programs that we're introducing, by separating the delivery of services and giving municipalities the responsibility for services while taking \$5.4 billion off the property tax, are going to be of major benefit to the taxpayers of this province.

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**Mr McGuinty:** At first we thought the minister had made an honest mistake, that he'd made an honest mistake and didn't fully understand and realize the implications of his actions. But the fact is, now you're ignoring the forceful objections of bodies like the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Toronto, the GTA mayors, the United Way, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and now David Crombie himself, your principal architect of this change. That ignoring on your part of those authorities tells me



you don't care what happens to property taxes and you don't care if you're lessening this province's capacity to care for its needy.

Tell me I'm wrong. Stand up now and retain what credibility you've got left, back down, admit that you've made a mistake and that you're going back to the drawing board.

**Hon Mr Leach:** If the Leader of the Opposition would like to me to tell him he's wrong, you're wrong, and it's certainly not the first time either.

Mr Crombie made a number of recommendations on how we should separate the delivery of services to the municipalities and split it with the province. He recommended that the municipalities deliver social services, and we agree with that. He recommended that the province just be a cheque writer for social services, and we don't accept that. We think that municipalities should share the cost equally with the province so that we both have a responsibility that ensures the expenditures are made in a proper manner.

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, the only thing longer than the list of experts opposing your scheme is a list of municipalities that say you're going to be responsible for the largest single property tax increase in the history of this province.

Here's the top 10 on today's hit parade of tax hike victims: Peterborough, \$13 million in new taxes; Niagara, \$43 million; Owen Sound, \$2 million; Kingston, \$23 million; Sudbury, \$105 million; Metropolitan Toronto, \$387 million; Hamilton-Wentworth, \$121 million; London, \$57 million; Haldimand-Norfolk, \$29 million; and Brantford, \$18 million in new property taxes.

That surely is not what you or the experts had in mind when you set about property tax reform in the province. Minister, will do you as David Crombie says? Will you forget your scheme to dump welfare, long-term care and property taxes and, once more I ask you, will you go back to the drawing board, take your time and get it right?

**Hon Mr Leach:** If the Leader of the Opposition wants us to proceed if we've got it right, that will allow us to proceed because we do have it right. We're heading in the right direction.

We know that municipalities through the transition period may require some assistance, and we're going to be there to provide that assistance. We have set aside \$2.5 billion to aid municipalities through the transition period between now and about the year 2000 to make sure that they're in good shape and able to provide the services that their citizens require. Some municipalities will need assistance; we know that. Other municipalities will be able to assume these responsibilities without any assistance whatsoever.

#### SOCIAL, COMMUNITY HEALTH AND HOUSING SERVICES

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I find the answers given by the minister responsible for municipal affairs very troubling, because we really are dealing with the future of our communities and a lot of us don't want to see our cities and towns start to look like some of the cities and towns that we see in the United States, where

you've got literally decrepit cores, crime-ridden, drug-ridden and everybody flees to the suburbs.

I want to ask you, Minister, even David Crombie now disagrees with you. Even David Crombie says you're putting municipalities in a position where they either have to increase property taxes or cut health care and social assistance.

When even David Crombie, the person you appointed as chair of the Who Does What committee — will you acknowledge now what everyone else knows, that your scheme to download on municipalities is going to be a disaster? Would you finally acknowledge that? Because everyone else in this province has acknowledged it.

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** When Mr Crombie raised the issue of social services on the taxpayer, we conceded that social services could be volatile and that if we had a downturn in the economy some municipalities may need some assistance. That's why we've set up the social services review fund. If any municipality — we doubt that's going to happen — requires some assistance in dealing with a downturn in the economy in their particular community, and needs help with social services, this government will be there to help them.

We don't think that's going to happen. We think that by the time our changes wash through the system by the year 2000, the municipalities will be in a strong position and able to reduce taxes, not increase them.

**Mr Hampton:** The minister tries to offer up something and hopes it will be soothing, but both the board of trade and David Crombie were very, very clear. They point out that in trying to push social assistance down on to municipalities, you are in effect pushing a broad-scale, income redistribution scheme down on to a very narrow tax, the property tax, and it won't work. They point out that the cost of health care, particularly long-term care, is growing faster than anything.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** They know that.

**Mr Hampton:** We all know that. So your talk about, "Well, we'll do a little over here and a little over there," will not paper over the fundamental cracks. You are digging a huge hole for municipalities, and to offer them a little bit of wallpaper and to say, "This is going to fix it," is nonsense. Even the Financial Post says you don't know what you're doing. Will you admit now that you're wrong? Everybody else in this province sees that your scheme won't work, that it'll be a disaster.

**Hon Mr Leach:** By the year 2000 there will be \$6.2 billion off the property tax. I had the pleasure of paying my interim tax bill yesterday from the city of Toronto —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Minister.

**Hon Mr Leach:** As I was saying, I had the privilege of paying my interim property tax bill yesterday from the city of Toronto and on that bill it was noted that 56% goes to education. My property taxes would be reduced by 56% by the province assuming the cost of education from the property tax and bringing it into our responsibility. That gives the city of Toronto 56% of the property tax base to come up with funding to pay for the services we've asked them to assume. I'm quite confident that



those fine public figures in the city of Toronto will be able to accomplish that.

**The Speaker:** Final supplementary.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** Everybody knows except you that the downloading of services is going to cause a major disaster for the property taxpayer. Minister, on this subject Mr Crombie has said that your plan to dump social housing appears to have been "done on the back of an envelope because it just sort of came out of the blue," and that to move \$1.4 billion in social housing to municipalities without any discussion, without any preparation for it is just wrong.

Hundreds of thousands of Ontarians, parents and kids, call public and non-profit and co-operative housing home. You know the municipalities will either have to run it into the ground, raise rents or sell off units, and you don't know where your megacity will come up with the \$200 million that public housing in Toronto needs in urgent capital repairs.

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David Crombie is your guy, or at least he was your guy up to a short while ago. Will you take his advice and drop your ill-conceived plan to dump social housing on the backs of municipalities that get their money from property taxes?

**Hon Mr Leach:** Mr Crombie is mistaken when he says that this issue wasn't discussed at the panel. There were several discussions that took place with the subpanel on social services.

**Mr Marchese:** Where were these discussions, Al?

**Hon Mr Leach:** Those discussions that took place by the subpanel on the Who Does What panel were in the boardroom in my building.

**Interjection:** Was Crombie lying?

**Mr Marchese:** Somebody's lying.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I heard someone accuse Mr Crombie of lying and I want to make sure the record shows that is absolutely not the case. I don't think he should be expected to recall and remember every meeting that took place. However, to get back to the issue of social housing, we were requested by a major municipality in Ontario to transfer to them the responsibilities for social housing.

**The Speaker:** New question. Leader of the third party.

**Mr Hampton:** To the minister responsible for municipal affairs again: Minister, I wonder if you can tell me this. You have said repeatedly that this is all about disentanglement. You have said that, by pursuing this downloading on to municipalities, this whole scheme, you will reduce waste and duplication. Can you tell me where the disentangling is happening?

As we see it, you're now going to be entangled with municipalities over long-term care 50-50, entangled with municipalities 50-50 on social assistance, entangled on child care, entangled on public health. Mr Crombie says that you're going to be more entangled than ever, that this is going to be less efficient than ever. Can you tell me where the efficiencies are going to come in this entangled mess that Crombie acknowledges you're creating?

**Hon Mr Leach:** Social services will now be delivered 100% by the municipalities. That is going to eliminate a

considerable amount of waste and duplication that's in the present system. Right now, somebody who requires social services can go to the province for some services, to the municipalities for other services; they're not sure who to ask about what. That will now be a far better service for those citizens who require social services.

Education will now become a responsibility of the province — 100% of the delivery for hard services, for the delivery and funding of transit, for road services, for water and sewers. By eliminating the waste and duplication that existed in the current system, municipalities are going to be able to save a considerable amount of money, and that's all part of the process in having a municipality be able in a few years to give a tax cut.

**Mr Hampton:** It's interesting to hear this from the minister who has been cited for contempt because —

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think you ruled earlier today, and quite correctly, that the minister has not been cited for contempt in this House, and I would ask you to instruct the member opposite to be more cautious in his remarks.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Durham East. Thank you.

I did stand in my place and actually correct the member for Oakwood and I know the leader of the third party was here or heard the correction. I assume you'll act accordingly.

**Mr Hampton:** A case was made out of prima facie contempt with this minister, so we've heard his comments. Now I think people deserve to hear what David Crombie had to say: "These recommendations entangle social services far more than ever before, health care far more than ever before. How this can be called disentanglement is an impressive stretch" of the imagination.

That's exactly where we are. No one in this province, no one who has looked at public finances with respect to municipal taxes and with respect to the downloading of health care and with respect to the downloading of social assistance sees that there's any efficiency here at all. All they see is you pushing large costs down on to municipalities. You know that municipalities won't be able to handle it through the property tax. They'll either have to raise property taxes or cut the services.

Why don't you come clean? Everybody else says you have no clothes. Why don't you come clean and admit that your scheme is nothing more than an effort to push the costs of these services down on to municipalities and force —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon Mr Leach:** Perhaps the leader of the third party should start looking at the costs we're taking off of the property tax. Obviously we're transferring some costs down to the municipalities, the costs of the hard services. We want to share the cost of social service delivery. But we are taking \$5.4 billion next year off the property tax. That number will increase to about \$6.2 billion by about the year 2000. Those tradeoffs are going to make the municipalities stronger. It's going to eliminate a lot of the waste and duplication that exists in the current system and it will allow municipalities in the very near future to be able to reduce property taxes, not increase them.



**Mr Hampton:** The minister can give this line all he wants. I'll read you some of the headlines today: "Crombie Blasts Tories on Welfare," "Crombie Criticizes Transfer Method: Social Services Plan Called a Mistake," "Disentanglement' Plan Is Seriously Flawed," "Ontario Tories Tangled Up in 'Disentanglement' Strategy."

No one believes you; absolutely no one believes you. People know that what you are downloading on to municipalities in terms of health care costs, in terms of social assistance costs, in terms of policing costs, in terms of all the other costs you're downloading on to municipalities is going to put municipalities across this province in a desperate situation. They will have no choice: Either they cut those health care services, cut those important community services, or they raise municipal property taxes. All this so that you can give your wealthy friends a tax gift.

Minister, will you finally admit you are wrong? Will you admit, as everybody else knows —

**The Speaker:** Minister?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I have absolutely no doubts whatsoever that the programs we're introducing are going to work.

The member opposite keeps talking about all of the services and the cost of services that are going down; he never, ever takes into consideration the cost of education coming off the property tax — \$5.4 billion, 56% of the tax bill in the city of Toronto, 71% of the tax bill in Mississauga off the property tax. That gives a huge window of property tax room for the municipalities to assign the costs of those services that we're asking them to take over.

I can only repeat that we know the municipalities are going to be stronger; they're going to be far better off. There's going to be a lot of waste and duplication eliminated, and again, property taxes should be able to be reduced by the year 2000.

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**The Speaker:** New question.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Hamilton East, come to order.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** I want to help them out.

**The Speaker:** I appreciate your trying to help them out, but you know what? You're not helping them out. I appreciate your assistance.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** The member for Oriole, I thank you for your assistance too but I wish you'd come to order as well.

New question, member for Oakwood.

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** To the Minister of Municipal Affairs: It seems that the only people who agree with you that this will not cause a property tax explosion are the people who are issuing these junk faxes. The mayor of North York, for instance, is saying your scheme to dump welfare and public housing on to taxpayers is going to cause nothing short of a national disaster. Your own hand-picked David Crombie said: "We had no discussions on social housing. I don't know of any report on social housing. I don't know of any

public discussion on social housing," Crombie told the Star.

"It was like it was done on the back of an envelope because it just sort of came out of the blue. To have social housing moved off (to municipalities) without any discussion...."

Minister, how can you not listen to Crombie, to the board of trade, to the mayor of North York who says taxes in North York are to go up \$400 per house?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I addressed that question a little earlier. There were discussions with the Who Does What sub-panel on social housing. Everyone knows that the federal Liberal government has, I believe in their throne speech, indicated that they want to get out of the social housing business. We agree with the federal government in this instance, that municipalities are best equipped to deliver social housing. They originally were the deliverers of social housing, and we think they would be best equipped to do it in the future.

We have just started discussions with the federal government. Social housing, as we've all stated, is a very complex issue. We know that it's going to take several years to work out the agreement and we are going to work with our partners in municipal government and the federal government on that.

**Mr Colle:** I think saying municipalities are best able to provide for social housing is like saying you want to take us back to the 1920s and 1930s, and that's what the minister is doing.

In terms of what the numbers are, your junk faxes are claiming that Metro is going to gain \$405 million. You've got the Metro chairman and the board of trade saying that Metro is going to be in the hole \$378 million, that taxes in Metro are going to go up \$7,900 per business, \$350 per home. How come the junk faxes you're releasing only give your side of the story? Where do you get this information from?

**Hon Mr Leach:** For the member for Oakwood, I'll respond to his editorial comment on social housing and point out to the Liberal Party that it was their federal Liberal cousins who have initiated the transfer of responsibility for social housing.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Parkdale, I'll hurry up. Yes. I'll do my best. Minister.

**Hon Mr Leach:** To deal with the social housing issue again, we know that it's going to take a long time to work out that program and we've always said that. It's very complex. It takes three levels of government right now to maintain an apartment building, and that just doesn't make any sense.

What we want to do is have the responsibility for maintaining and looking after social housing at the level of government that's best able to provide it. That is the municipal government. We agree with that, the federal government agrees with that and the municipalities agree with that.

#### EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a question for the Minister of Education and Training. The minister's colleague, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing,



has made a great deal of the transfer of education from the residential property tax. Last night in east-end Toronto more than 350 people came out to talk about the government's proposed changes in the Ontario education system, a meeting that didn't have the benefit of the presence of the minister or anyone from the Ministry of Education and Training.

We know that the minister has indicated that there may be more cuts in education funding in 1998. Parents in Metropolitan Toronto want to know if they're going to lose up to \$2,000 per child that they spend now above the provincial average, which supports classrooms, junior kindergarten, excellent language programs and other programs in this city for students. Can the minister alleviate these parents' concern? Will the minister commit today that per pupil spending in Metropolitan Toronto schools will not change when the provincial government has complete control over education funding?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I'm glad to have the member raise the question in the House today because I think that where there is any misunderstanding in Ontario we'd like to address that. I was very pleased to make an announcement that will not only end waste and duplication in the bureaucracy that surrounds education, that will not only focus spending in the classroom, but will also for the first time have the province take the senior responsibility for funding the education needs of every student in the province.

I've said very clearly time and time again, and I'm pleased to repeat today, that the commitment of our government is to meet the needs of every single individual student across the province regardless of their circumstances. We will commit the funds that are necessary to do that, because we are committed to student achievement in this province, to lifting student achievement from the mediocrity that has been the case in the past to excellence, to take our students to the top of the class. We will do that.

**Mr Wildman:** Through that rhetoric I guess the answer was yes, that he cannot commit that there will not be cuts in the funding once he takes control. It would be helpful, I suppose, if the minister would be willing, as was my colleague the member for Beaches-Woodbine, to attend such a meeting and talk to the people and let them know what he intends to do. It's not just in Metropolitan Toronto; it's across the province. I've been to London and Cobourg.

In all these communities people believe that come 1998, when the provincial government has complete control over education funding, the minister and this Conservative government will take the opportunity to take up to \$1 billion further out of education in this province. Will the minister guarantee today that there will be no further decreases in educational funding for students in Ontario during this government's term of office?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I've already had the pleasure of announcing some time before Christmas that we will have stable funding for the next year in education and I have committed very clearly to changing the funding method. Perhaps the member opposite likes the funding method when the allocation for a student's education is predicated on the property value in that student's neighbourhood. I

think it's a silly way of funding education. So does everyone else who's ever studied education.

Here's our promise one more time: Our promise is to meet the needs of the students, to meet the needs of every student across this province, because as the member opposite knows, this system needs to be reformed, needs to be changed so that every student's needs can be met. I'm proud that this government finally took that obligation on. Your government would not, sir.

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## AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre):** My question is for the minister responsible for auto insurance and minister for privatization. Before the 1995 election, many of my constituents complained to me about their rising automobile insurance. They kept getting increase after increase in their premiums, despite rate freeze promises from the Liberals and promises from the NDP that no-fault insurance would not increase their rates. This is an important issue for my constituents because many of them need to drive a great distance to get to and from work every day. The government promised a new auto insurance system which would stabilize rates. Will the minister responsible tell me what is happening today with auto insurance rates?

**Hon Rob Sampson (Minister without Portfolio [Privatization]):** As a matter of fact, today I announced that for the first time in four years rates have actually gone down in this province for auto insurance. That's after three years of almost 30% in rate increases, engineered by these people over here in the opposition.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** This is an interesting discussion but may be better taking place outside.

**Hon Mr Sampson:** I'm pleased to say that these rate reductions of 3% over the one year are a result of Bill 59, the Automobile Insurance Rate Stability Act, which we brought forward in November 1996. We said we were putting Ontarians, the Ontario consumers, the auto insurance buyers in this province, back in the driver's seat and we have.

**Mr Tascona:** That's good news, but I know my constituents would be interested in some specifics.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I want to hear the question from the member for Simcoe Centre, and if it takes us 10 minutes, I'm going to hear the question.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** We're pleased to hear it.

**The Speaker:** I'm very pleased to hear it too, member for Hamilton East, and that's the warning. Any more and I'll ask that you be removed. The member for Simcoe Centre.

**Mr Tascona:** I'm interested in some specifics. The minister has told us how much the rates have gone down. I would ask the minister to comment on what this means for Ontario drivers and what he plans to do to keep rates stable.

**Hon Mr Sampson:** Because of Bill 59 the average cost for auto insurance, as I said earlier, has fallen 3%



year over year to the end of 1996. That rate reduction, by the way, equals savings of approximately \$160 million for drivers in this province. I'd like to repeat that this is the first year-over-year decrease this province has seen in four years. It's good news for Ontario drivers. It reflects increased competition in this province for auto insurance, which will benefit consumers in the form of better rates for good drivers.

#### SOCIAL, COMMUNITY HEALTH AND HOUSING SERVICES

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. It has to do with — I use your own numbers — the cost to municipalities. Firstly, you have confirmed that you are offloading over \$1 billion of expenses. You've taken the education portion off and your own figures indicate you have added \$1 billion of cost. You then go on to say you have three funds available, but one fund is not available to cover any of these costs under these circumstances, by your own admission; that's the social assistance fund. The second fund is available only for one-time costs and will disappear, so that fund doesn't come into effect. The third fund you say is a \$1-billion fund, but it replaces an existing \$666-million fund. Will you confirm what all of this says, and that is, you have added \$1 billion of cost, according to your own numbers, and you are going to provide about \$335 million of extra revenue for municipalities?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I can confirm that yes, this government has set aside \$2.5 billion to ensure that any municipalities that require assistance will be able to get that assistance. I can confirm the numbers he has quoted: \$700 million for social services in the first instance; \$800 million for any municipality that may require upgrades to infrastructure that is being transferred to them; and \$1 billion which does consist of the current municipal support grant and an additional \$350 million which will be available on a permanent basis to provide assistance to any municipality that may require it. The member is correct in his mathematics.

**Mr Phillips:** Just to confirm then, the social assistance fund is not available, will not be available to municipalities unless there's some unforeseen economic circumstance. You've offloaded \$1 billion of cost. None of that money is available. You're also confirming that the four-year fund is gone — after four years it's for one-time costs only — and has nothing to do with the \$1 billion. You've confirmed that. The third thing you've confirmed is that the \$1-billion fund is not \$1 billion. You're subtracting \$660 million.

Just to be absolutely clear, because today you have confirmed that neither of those first two funds apply and that you are going to add \$335 million for the municipalities to pick up \$1 billion of cost: Isn't that why the municipality of Metropolitan Toronto is telling you that you've added \$380 million of cost, that you're going to drive residential property taxes up 15% because you've added \$1 billion of cost, and you have just admitted today you are providing municipalities with about \$335

million of revenue to cover an added \$1 billion of your cost? Will you confirm those numbers?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I'm glad, I'm very pleased that the member for Scarborough-Agincourt has admitted that municipalities will not have to draw on that \$700 million for social services funds. I'm sure they won't either. The \$800,000 for infrastructure improvement is our commitment to municipalities to ensure that when we ask them to assume the costs of certain road transfers and hard services, that will be brought up.

Why do I think the \$1 billion we're setting up will be sufficient? Because of situations like this, where the city of Brampton pushes for a tax decrease. The quote is, "We're at zero with our budget now and we are confident that we will be able to reduce taxes." That's why that amount of money will be sufficient.

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#### CHILD POVERTY

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Your federal, provincial and territorial counterparts are meeting today and tomorrow to discuss the proposed national child income benefit. You talked about that yesterday in this House, and I was quite disturbed by your comments. You said that some of the options "would actually mean we would be lowering our welfare rates in Ontario in order to try and match this benefit from Ottawa."

You were paraphrased in the newspaper recently, saying something similar, in the Toronto Star on Saturday. They quoted you as saying that Ontario isn't interested in child benefit unless the federal government provides enough additional help that Ontario won't have to "dip once again into the pockets of families on welfare."

Minister, I agree with your sentiment that we want the federal government to propose a program that is a meaningful program, but I have to ask you, are you serious? Are you actually telling us that your government, the government that's managed to find \$5 billion for a tax break, can't do something for poor children without taking money from the poorest of this province?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** I appreciate the question today. Later this afternoon I'll be going to meet with the other social service ministers and Mr Pettigrew, our counterpart from Ottawa, to talk about how, as all the governments in Canada, we can indeed have an integrated child benefit that will help address the concerns of children in poverty. The difficulty of course, as you will appreciate, is how we can do that in a way that actually gets that money to those people who need it.

There are a number of options on the table, and one of the administrative challenges in those options is that it calls for provinces to potentially decrease the welfare rate that certain people on welfare are getting in order to have Ottawa top it up. Maybe all in the wash that might help, but surely there has to be a simpler way that we can help support children in poverty.

**Ms Lankin:** I have a lot of problems with the federal Liberal government, believe me, but I do not believe for



one moment that they have placed options on the table that would force social assistance recipients to have their benefits cut. We have heard from day one that Ontario has been a problem at the table, that you have been a barrier to getting agreement on this national child income benefit.

Minister, child poverty is real. It is a shame and it is a crisis. Ontario can play a leading role in making this a reality. We need your commitment today that you will join forces with BC and with the others so that we will have a reality of a national child income program, and further, we need your commitment that you won't finance it on the backs of the poorest people in this province. If you can afford \$5 billion for the wealthiest, you can find the money to make sure we get kids out of poverty.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I would like to remind the honourable member that it was not Ottawa that came up with wanting to do a child benefit; it was the provinces. It was the premiers of the provinces who instructed the social service ministers that we must work on this. We have agreed. Ontario is not — I repeat, Ontario is not — in any way standing in the way of this occurring.

**Ms Lankin:** It is what everybody says in the room.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Absolutely not. As a matter of fact, we are chairing the technical working group that is trying to resolve some of these problems.

I wasn't criticizing Ottawa. I am not criticizing Ottawa. They are just as committed to trying to make this happen as all the provinces are, and I certainly look forward to a positive outcome of these discussions as we work through the significant problems over the coming months.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** My question is to the minister responsible for women's issues. Minister, critics have stated that the government is not taking enough positive action in dealing with violence against women. I know that with some of the events in the past few months in particular, it's been a very difficult subject in view of the misinformation that has been out in the public and in the media. I'm wondering if you can provide us with the bigger picture on what is actually being done in this regard.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** Question?

**Mrs Marland:** Thank you for your help, member for Lake Nipigon.

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues):** With respect to the question from the member, we continue to take positive steps to address violence against women in this province, which is of concern to everyone in every community and home, and everyone knows that we passed the Victims' Bill of Rights. We continue to identify and to protect the rights of victims of violence and victims of crime, many of whom are women.

We established the victim notification system, providing victims with updates of the offenders' status, and we have established the automated information and referral service, which also is a place where people can phone and ask for advice as to where they can get help. We have expanded VWAP, which is extremely popular in our

courts, the victim/witness assistance program, from 13 to 26 sites —

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** Talk about what they cut.

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** — and we have expanded VCARS, the victim crisis assistance and referral service, from four to 16 sites. There are many others, including the two domestic violence courts —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mrs Marland:** I appreciate those answers. It's really significant when the members opposite are chirping in with their editorial comment —

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** It's because we don't believe a word she's saying.

**Mrs Marland:** — when they had the opportunity to solve this problem. The problem of family violence is not a new problem, and I would ask the minister if she could tell the House what future steps will be taken with regard to the prevention of violence against women, a concern that all of us share and one that is not just a new, recent event.

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** Perhaps I can take just a minute to say how disappointed I am with the remarks of my colleague the member for Beaches-Woodbine, who continues to say that no one believes this. There are real people in this community who are getting these services, and they're very appreciative of them. Last week —

**Ms Churley:** Shame on you. Women know what you are up to.

**The Speaker:** Member for Riverdale, you're out of order, first, for heckling and, second, for sitting beside the member for Nickel Belt. I would ask that you go back to your seat.

Second, it's very difficult. I'm sitting right here and I had a very difficult time hearing the question from the member for Mississauga South and the minister. If you could come to order, I'd appreciate it.

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** I think the question is an important one. Last week we were in Ottawa announcing the first in a series of some 17 projects funded through the community victim initiative programs on behalf of both the Solicitor General and the Attorney General. These are new programs, and Louise Ford from the Capital Region Centre for the Hearing Impaired should be congratulated for the grant she received on behalf of her work in that centre for over \$32,000 to identify and promote videos to help women with the whole issue of sexual assault and violence, and hopefully prevent it, especially those women who are hearing-impaired. I want to thank certainly the ministers for establishing this kind of a project.

Also Lisa Oegema of the Women's Sexual Assault Centre of Renfrew county — they got some \$9,000, and this is another project. A community-wide conference will be held, an information fair on issues of sexual assault. This is a sexual assault centre that is contributing tremendously, I might add, to the largest community, the largest county in Ontario. I will wind up by saying it's sad that we have to use this forum to get our message out, but with the kinds of remarks that the member for Riverdale —

*Interjections.*



**The Speaker:** Thank you.

The member for Ottawa West, I'm fully capable of controlling exactly how much time each member has to answer a question, but I appreciate your assistance.

#### SOCIAL, COMMUNITY HEALTH AND HOUSING SERVICES

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** I would like to return to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The figures are now coming in from —

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Kingston and The Islands, I apologize. There was —

**Ms Churley:** I'll do it after question period.

**The Speaker:** You're going to do it after question period? I'm not sorry any more. Member for Kingston and The Islands.

**Mr Gerretsen:** It's given the minister maybe a couple more seconds to think about an answer, because he certainly hasn't answered his questions so far. The figures are coming in from all across the province of how your particular swap is affecting municipalities. As a matter of fact, the massive swap of responsibilities you've imposed on municipal taxpayers is falling apart and you're creating chaos in this province.

We've heard that in Brantford, for example, there's an \$18-million increase in taxes expected; in Brant county, \$8 million; in my own city of Kingston, \$23 million. The headline of our local paper screams "Swapped Costs Shock City Staff" — not the politicians, not a commission, but the staff who are actually doing the work to see how these cuts are affecting them.

As one of the municipal treasurers said, it shows that you, the government, charged ahead with the welfare-for-education swap without having any statistics whatsoever. Why, Minister, are you creating this chaos and showing such contempt for municipalities and for the taxpayers of this province?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** When we started into the Who Does What panel, the goal was to separate the delivery of services. By taking the total delivery of social services and making it the responsibility of the municipalities, that is going to provide a far better, more effective, safer system that will save money. I'm sure that if the municipalities have 100% of the responsibility for the delivery of services, they will be able to find efficiencies in the totally wasteful system that we have at the present time. I'm confident that all the municipalities across the province that have responsibility for delivery of those services will be able to do that, including the member's home town of Kingston.

**The Speaker:** Supplementary? Sorry, member for Kenora.

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** My question as well is —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. It doesn't take a lot to entertain these people over here. Member for Kenora, I apologize.

**Mr Miclash:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. My question is also to the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Minister, we have many, many municipal leaders across my riding who are extremely frustrated. They're frustrated because back in the election campaign they were told that a Mike Harris government would work closely with them and a Mike Harris government would not dump new taxes on to local taxpayers. That's what they were told.

1510

My office has been calling various municipalities throughout northern Ontario. What are they saying now? Kenora cannot see a tax decrease through this minister's movement. Sault Lookout: not enough information; not a chance of a tax decrease. Ignace: They're concerned with the labour costs associated with the changes, and again they're looking to having to increase their taxes. Dryden said that they're looking at a 10% tax decrease as just not realistic, as the Treasurer indicated earlier. It's just not possible.

I will be attending the Kenora District Municipal Association meeting in Sault Lookout on February 7. What I want from you are some facts and figures I can take to them to show what your movement is going to mean to the municipalities of northern Ontario.

**Hon Mr Leach:** In response to the member for Kenora, I know the Minister of Northern Development and Mines will have a representative at that conference in February. His parliamentary assistant, Mr Murdoch, will be there, and I am confident that Mr Murdoch will be able to provide all the answers that anyone in Kenora riding would care to ask.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Let me get some order, please. I want to hear a point of privilege from the member for Riverdale.

**Ms Churley:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I stand on a point of privilege. I was unable to get the exact words of the comments made by the minister responsible for women's issues in response to the question from the member for Mississauga South. She said something to this extent in response, that she had to stand in the House to get the truth out because of the kinds of things the member for Riverdale is implying. Perhaps you can review the Instant Hansard later, but she very clearly, in my view, suggested that I was lying and telling untruths to the people of Ontario, and I know that is against the rules of the House.

Further, I would add that everything I say to the people of Ontario about this government's agenda on the cuts to services to women in this province is the truth, and I resent very much having this minister using the kind of propaganda she does in this House to convince women that she's not cutting services, to use that to imply that I am lying.

**The Speaker:** I appreciate your point of privilege, and I'll tell you, I did not hear the minister say that and I am not far from the minister. I apologize, but it was rather loud. I can only ask that if the minister did say it, she can withdraw it, or ask her whether or not that is what she said. I put it to the minister at this point in time.

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues):** Quite the contrary, I was responding to the



remark, "Nobody believes you, Dianne." That's all I was responding to. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** As far as I can say, I didn't hear the comment and the minister said it wasn't that way, so that's basically as it is.

## MOTIONS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 96(d), Mr Patten and Mr Phillips exchange places in the order of precedence for private members' public business.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

### COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTIONS

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** I move that the following substitutions be made on the standing committees:

On the standing committee on administration of justice, Mr Crozier for Mr Conway; on the standing committee on estimates, Mr Bartolucci for Mr Cordiano, Mr Kennedy for Mr Curling; on the standing committee on finance and economic affairs, Mr Cordiano for Ms Castrilli; on the standing committee on general government, Mr Colle for Mr Grandmaître, Mr Gravelle for Mrs Pupatello; on the standing committee on government agencies, Mr Miclash for Mr Crozier; on the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly, Mr Curling for Mr Bartolucci, Mrs Pupatello for Mr Miclash;

On the standing committee on the Ombudsman, Mr Patten for Mrs Caplan; on the standing committee on public accounts, Mr Grandmaître for Mr McGuinty, Mr Lalonde for Mr Kennedy, Mr Patten for Mr Colle, Mrs Pupatello for Mr Crozier; on the standing committee on regulations and private bills, Mr Gerretsen for Mrs Pupatello, Mr Kennedy for Mr Sergio; on the standing committee on resources development, Mr Agostino for Mr Duncan, Mr Conway for Mr Lalonde; on the standing committee on social development, Mrs Caplan for Mr Gravelle, Ms Castrilli for Mr Patten, Mr Duncan for Mr Gerretsen and Mrs McLeod for Mr Kennedy.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

## PETITIONS

### TVONTARIO

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas TVOntario has been providing Ontarians of all ages with high-quality educational programs and services delivered through television and other media for 25 years; and

"Whereas TVOntario provides universal access to educational broadcasting in the most effective way possible; and

"Whereas TVOntario provides essential broadcast services to communities in northern Ontario; and

"Whereas TVOntario has an extensive community-based advisory network spanning the province; and

"Whereas TVOntario is committed to increasing net self-generated revenues by 15% every year;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To formally commit to the province's continued support of TVOntario as a publicly owned educational network."

I've attached my name to that petition as well.

### WORKFARE

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** I have here a petition from many citizens of the city of Timmins who petition the provincial government and the Legislature as follows:

"We, the following undersigned citizens, beg leave to petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the Harris government has initiated the workfare program; and

"Whereas the unemployment rate in the province of Ontario increased by 57,000 in the month of September 1996 alone, giving a clear indication that there is a need for job creation; and

"Whereas the majority of welfare recipients do want to work and there is no evidence that workfare will create permanent jobs; and

"Whereas we believe workfare will eliminate permanent jobs;

"Therefore, be it resolved that the government of Ontario abandon its workfare program and concentrate on job creation."

I've signed that petition.

### DRINKING AND DRIVING

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** I have a petition which has been forwarded to me by a psychologist from the Lyndhurst spinal cord centre, Dr Keith Walker, and the petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas 47% of all driving fatalities are alcohol-related; and

"Whereas 544 persons died in alcohol-related crashes in Ontario in 1994, the most recent year for which statistics are available, and more than 25,500 drivers were charged with impaired driving in the same year; and

"Whereas 65% of the total convictions for drunk driving in 1994 involved repeat offenders; and

"Whereas every year drinking and driving costs Ontarians \$1.3 billion in personal financial loss, medical expenses and property damage; and

"Whereas the existing measures and penalties have failed to deter chronic impaired drivers from reoffending; and

"Whereas driving is a privilege, not a right, and chronic impaired drivers have failed to take their driving responsibilities seriously;



"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact Margaret Marland's private member's Bill 85, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Impaired Driving), 1996, or similar legislation, as soon as possible."

I'm happy to add my support to this petition, and I think particularly coming from Lyndhurst lodge, it's a very significant submission from those people who have sustained spinal cord injuries from drunk drivers.

1520

#### USER FEES

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** I keep receiving petitions about the \$2 user fee for seniors, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ministry of Health has started to charge senior citizens and social service assistance recipients a \$2 user fee for each prescription filled since July 15, 1996; and

"Whereas seniors on a fixed income do not significantly benefit from the income tax savings created by this user copayment fee or from other non-health user fees; and

"Whereas the perceived savings to health care from the \$2 user fee will not compensate for the suffering and misery caused by this user fee or the painstaking task involved to fill out the application forms; and

"Whereas the Minister of Health promised as an opposition MPP in a July 5 letter to Ontario pharmacists that his party would not endorse legislation that will punish patients to the detriment of health care in Ontario;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned Ontario residents, strongly urge the government to repeal this user fee plan because the tax-saving user fee concept is not fair, it is not sensitive, it is not accessible to low-income or fixed-income seniors, and lest we forget, our province's seniors have paid their dues by collectively contributing to the social, economic, moral and political fabric of Canada."

I have affixed my signature to this document.

#### ONTARIO CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTE

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, believe that helping reduce crime and abuse in our communities is our responsibility as employees of the Ministry of Correctional Services, as professionals in related fields and as concerned citizens;

"Closing institutions which provide specialized services to women and treatment to men does not achieve that goal;

"Physical, emotional and sexual abuse is often transmitted from one generation to the next, with tremendous cost to society;

"Treatment aimed at breaking that cycle must include the abuser so that another generation of children is not raised with the same destructive lessons;

"As Mr Ross Virgo stated, the Ontario Correctional Institute is a 'therapeutic community known around the world for their techniques';

"Research statistics support anecdotal evidence that we are effective in changing abusive behaviour;

"A therapeutic community cannot exist in a super-prison;

"Save victims and money by keeping what works open."

I have attached my name to this petition since I know it's in the proper form and will be accepted by the table.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr John L. Parker (York East):** I am presenting a petition this afternoon on behalf of my friend and colleague the member for Don Mills, and although I suspect that the draftsman did not couch this petition in a format that's acceptable to the Legislature, out of respect for those who took the trouble to sign it, I'm pleased to read it this afternoon. It reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned residents of East York, are in favour of the borough of East York remaining as a separate municipality."

#### CLASS SIZE

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the private member's bill introduced by Rick Bartolucci, MPP for the riding of Sudbury, limits the number of pupils that may be enrolled in a class in a school in Ontario; and

"Whereas this limit depends on the grade level of the class; and

"Whereas studies have concluded that there are clear benefits from smaller class sizes; and

"Whereas there is greater student involvement and interaction; and

"Whereas there is improved student performance; and

"Whereas there is the opportunity for greater individualization; and

"Whereas smaller class sizes allow for more varied and constructive education for students;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support this private member's bill as it enhances classroom education."

I have affixed my signature to this petition.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario submitted by the United Steelworkers of America, the United Food and Commercial Workers and the Canadian Auto Workers. It reads as follows:

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of workers for many years; and

"Whereas the centre and clinics have made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health and safety and the reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode

the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

On my behalf of my caucus colleagues and myself, I add my name to theirs.

#### TEACHERS' LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr Gary Fox (Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly that has been signed by over 1,100 residents in just 72 hours. It reads:

"Whereas the teachers of Lennox and Addington secondary school board have been on strike since December 9, 1996, in this their third strike in the last 10 years;

"Whereas the quality of education for the current school year is damaged beyond repair and the students of the three schools in Lennox and Addington are at risk of losing their school term due to this strike;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To find a resolution to the strike so that they may return to school immediately."

I affix my signature to this petition.

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** I have a petition signed by hundreds of recipients of the family support plan who are still very concerned about the absolute chaos that has resulted in the plan. The petition reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario,

"Despite the Attorney General's continued belief that the centralized family support plan office has cleared up all the problems previously experienced, we, the deserving recipients of this plan, know that the plan continues to operate in a state of chaos and is depriving many of us of the means to feed and clothe our children and in many cases to pay our rent.

"Therefore, we call on the Attorney General to apologize to the people of Ontario, to recognize his mistake and to reinstate the regional offices of the family support plan which allowed us direct contact with people who cared."

I'm proud to sign my name to that petition.

#### RENT REGULATION

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly. It reads:

"Whereas the government of Ontario is proposing to take away the protections of the Rent Control Act; and

"Whereas the government is proposing to allow a landlord to charge a tenant who moves into an apartment whatever the landlord can get away with; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario is proposing to raise the limit of how high rents can increase for all tenants; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario is proposing to make it easier to demolish or convert existing affordable rental housing; and

"Whereas the government is proposing to take away the rent freeze which has been successful in forcing some landlords to repair their buildings;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to keep the existing rent laws which provide true protection for tenants in place."

I affix my signature to this.

#### PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"The Harris government must not be allowed to make any further changes to the workers' compensation and health and safety act. Too many workers die in our province in workplaces; too many get injured. The expected changes include:

"Erosion of the right to refuse unsafe work.

"Workers will be forced to apply to their employer for WCB benefits.

"Employers must decide if the claim is valid..

"Reduction in power of joint health and safety committees.

"Eliminate compensation for certain injuries and diseases.

"Whereas the Workers' Compensation Act is a vital protection for all workers in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Occupational Health and Safety Act has prevented untold numbers of accidents and saved thousands from illness and diseases;

"We, the undersigned, therefore, call upon the Legislature of Ontario to save our workers' lives and not contribute to the killing of workers of Ontario. The protection for workers must stay and has to be made stronger.

"We therefore demand full public hearings throughout the province of Ontario on the Workers' Compensation Act proposed changes, and no changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, workers' right to refuse and joint health and safety committees."

That's signed by 62 constituents from S-D-G and Cornwall.

#### NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final



report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I've affixed my signature.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Further petitions. The Chair recognizes the member for Beaches-Woodbine.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** I move that we proceed to orders of the day.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Is it the wish of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

1530

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### FEWER SCHOOL BOARDS ACT, 1997

##### LOI DE 1997 RÉDUISANT

##### LE NOMBRE DE CONSEILS SCOLAIRES

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 104, an Act to improve the accountability, effectiveness and quality of Ontario's school system by permitting a reduction in the number of school boards, establishing an Education Improvement Commission to oversee the transition to the new system, providing for certain matters related to elections in 1997 and making other improvements to the Education Act and the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 / Loi de 1997 visant à accroître l'obligation de rendre compte, l'efficacité et la qualité du système scolaire ontarien en permettant la réduction du nombre des conseils scolaires, en créant la Commission d'amélioration de l'éducation, chargée d'encadrer la transition vers le nouveau système, en prévoyant certaines questions liées aux élections de 1997 et en apportant d'autres améliorations à la Loi sur l'éducation et à la Loi de 1996 sur les élections municipales.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** The Chair recognizes the member for Fort York.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** It's a pleasure to continue to debate Bill 104 and to expose the real agenda of this Conservative government around the supposed reform that is contained in this bill.

There was a meeting at Clinton Street Public School in my riding yesterday which I attended, where a number of people spoke to the real concerns contained in Bill 104, the real concerns that are not contained there but which are coming very soon. The 60 parents who were there, parents very active and concerned around the education of their children, talked about the agenda of this government having to do with giving less money to public education, in particular to the Metropolitan Toronto public school system.

There's a real fear, and I share it, that what we're going to get from this government is a reduction of general grants from it to most of the public school system in Ontario, particularly Metro and some other major public boards like Ottawa and so on. They are afraid because this government will say it wants to achieve parity between the two public systems that we have, Catholic and the other public system. They know that the Metro separate school system has less money than our Metro public system, and in order to achieve parity what they will do is take money away from our system and then say to the Metro separate school system: "You are now going to be equal. We will have achieved parity by giving the public school system less and now you, Metropolitan separate school system, no longer have a claim or a case to being underfunded."

That's the real agenda, I argue, and there's more, and I will touch on that in the remaining five minutes.

They have proposed to amalgamate all of the boards in Metropolitan Toronto, where they will have to deal with 300,000 students. The few trustees that remain will be divided across great wards, and of the \$5,000 remuneration that you propose, very few knowledgeable people will get back into the field. Not only that, they know there will be little left for those trustees to do because the Education Improvement Commission will have abrogated all their rights, will have trampled over any remaining rights that the existing trustees will have. In terms of future powers, all of that is unclear. Why would any trustee ever run for that system again?

What they have done very successfully is to attack trustees. What they have done successfully is to find a convenient scapegoat for their problems. The scapegoats for their problems have become the trustees of our school systems, and the other scapegoat is the bureaucrats; there are simply too many. When you add up the dollars for the trustees and you add up the dollars for superintendents and directors, it doesn't amount to much, but this Conservative government makes it appear that this is where the problem lies, and that's what Bill 104 addresses, that everything will be all right. The real agenda of this government is to take billions out of our system. Some people say \$1.2 billion; I argue they want to take approximately \$2 billion out of the educational system. I can predict this will happen.

Bill 104 talks about "An Act to improve the accountability, effectiveness and quality of Ontario's school system by permitting a reduction in the number of school boards, establishing an Education Improvement Commission to oversee the transition to the new system" and on and on. There is nothing in this bill that will improve education.

The bill establishes, for example, new district school boards and transition processes without any provision for a new role for boards in relation to management of schools and financial decision-making. It's gone. Trustees, new ones, won't have a clue as to what they will be doing. Nothing in this act helps new trustees or those who wish to run to have a sense of what they might be doing. My view is that there is little to do, so you'll find very few people who will run because effectively their power has been taken away.



With no apparent rationale, spouses of school board employees are prohibited from running for office at any board. What rationale is there for that? How does that improve the accountability and effectiveness of the quality of Ontario's education? It does not.

Buried among the Education Improvement Commission's responsibilities is the Harris government's hidden agenda: the establishment of charter schools. We will see private schools in Ontario funded by public boards. That's what this is all about. It's a sad chain of events that is occurring here, nothing to do with accountability and effectiveness but something else.

What this government is after is \$1.5 billion or \$2 billion. They're going to do it by taking collective rights away from teachers; the Minister of Education has said as much. He will prevent them from being able to strike, taking an essential tool and right that they have had for countless years. That's how he's going to take money out of the system and that's why he's centralizing funding and that's why he's taking the education portion out of property taxes, in order to centralize and control it so that he can give a whole lot fewer dollars through the general grants. That's the real agenda.

Finally, he will go after teachers on their preparation time because there's \$1 billion there. If teachers think they can snugly sit at home and not fight this government, they're wrong.

Bill 104 does nothing whatsoever to improve education or accountability. It has all to do with taking up to \$2 billion out of the educational system. That's what people need to understand. That is why I urge those who are listening and watching to fight back against the assault on our educational system.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments or questions?

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** I'd like to congratulate the member on his speech. I think the public of Ontario ought to realize that what this is really all about is the government getting control of the education system. It has nothing to do with bringing more accountability to the system. Once they get control of that system and once they get control of all of the finances, which they have now done or are going to do once all the various pieces of legislation have passed, then in effect the role of the boards of education will be seriously reduced, because quite frankly, there's no longer the accountability factor that the people on the boards of education will have to their local taxpayers, since they will not be imposing any local taxation on them at all.

It really doesn't matter then how big the boards are. As a matter of fact, the bigger you make the boards, the less accountability or the less the ability of anybody within the system of trying to get a hold of their trustee at all will be. I would strongly urge the people of Ontario to watch this debate as it unfolds, because really what has happened is that we've had a swap of \$5.4 billion that has been taken off the property tax roll, that's correct, so that the province could get complete control of the education system.

On the other hand, they've loaded on \$6.3 billion, mainly in social costs, mainly in health care costs, when just about every expert who has ever done a report on this whole subject matter has agreed over a period of

time, not only here in Canada or in the United States but all over the world, that the property tax system is the worst kind of system to use to raise funds for either health care or social services. The main reason for that is the property tax system simply cannot react to any emergencies that may come along in the health care or social system.

1540

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I always listen carefully to my colleague the member for Fort York, and I expect that others in the House do as well, from all sides, no matter whether you're a government member or in opposition, because my colleague from Fort York, members may or may not be aware, had eight years of experience sitting as a school trustee in the inner city of Toronto in the west end, and before that was a teacher.

I expect that none of us is going to agree in this House on a lot of things, including this bill, but I do believe that everything the member for Fort York has to say, with his expertise and experience, should not be taken as just rhetoric by the government benches, because the experience that members of the opposition, as members of the government — I don't know if there are government members who sat as school trustees or not, but I believe it's imperative when we're making such massive changes to our system that we try to listen to each other, and perhaps when the time comes, to make amendments that will improve this bill that, as my colleague points out, is a terrible blow to the kids of this province. My colleague is quite right.

We all know on this side of the House and the parents and the teachers out there and the school trustees all know what's happening here, that the school trustees are being used as a scapegoat. The government is busy convincing the people of Ontario that millions and millions of dollars are going to be saved by getting rid of school trustees when we all know what my colleague the member for Fort York is saying is true, that what this exercise really is all about is getting \$1 billion, maybe \$2 billion out of the system, and it's going to be kids in the classroom who will suffer as a result.

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** I want to comment briefly on the well-prepared, leadoff 90-minute speech that was given by our two members on a previous day and the completion today. It's quite obvious that what this government is doing, and the member pointed out quite clearly, is taking about \$2 billion out of education, which is going to be less for classroom education, and they're saying that they're going to take education off property taxes.

But what they're doing is if they take \$5.3 billion off property taxes, in turn they're putting another \$6.4 billion on to the property taxes in other services like long-term care, welfare, housing, child care, ambulance services, health care, transit capital, transit operating, provincial highways, ferries, police, farm property tax and libraries. All of these services that property taxes were not used for before — they were being paid for by the provincial government — are now going to be dumped on to the property owners.

I know that most of the mayors and reeves throughout my riding — and I'm sure it's the same thing in Toronto



and a lot of the other ridings — are very upset. I have an article here from the mayor of Kapuskasing: "Kap Mayor Upset by Restructuring from the Province." He feels that the Mike Harris led government is in total disarray and is doing whatever possible to cut the deficit and balance the budget on the backs of the property owners right across this province, and it's going to be a nightmare for some of the municipalities, towns and cities within Ontario that do not have the resources to be able to — they don't have the manpower. They've cut down to the bare bone already, and now they're going to be dumped on with all these services. How are they going to be able to deliver that? I congratulate the member on his leadoff speech.

**Mr Frank Mclash (Kenora):** I too will just say that there is a lot of frustration out there. I indicated earlier today in my question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs that there's frustration with what he's doing. There's also frustration with what the Minister of Education is doing in terms of northern Ontario.

We were told by Mike Harris at one time during the last election campaign that he would be there to listen to the concerns of northern Ontario, and this legislation and what the member has said about it just shows that he is not.

One school board, Thunder Bay West: That would make any board want to question how closely this government is really looking at what it's doing in terms of a public board and a separate board west of Thunder Bay. Going back to the member's comments, representation on such a board would be very difficult. I believe that a good number of members in the House, members of the government, even the minister himself may not realize the distance factor and what they're asking the new boards of education to do in terms of bringing in representation, in terms of representing the parents, the taxpayers; not only that, but the students who go to our various schools.

The chair of the separate school board was on the phone to me not more than half an hour ago asking many questions about what this will mean in terms of unorganized territories, what this will mean in terms of those people who aren't in the organized municipalities in our region.

There are a lot of flaws in this particular piece of legislation in terms of the aspect from northern Ontario. I certainly hope that both the minister and the government listen to some of those concerns as brought forth by the various board representatives.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Fort York has two minutes.

**Mr Marchese:** I thank the members for Kingston and The Islands, Riverdale, Cochrane North and Kenora for their comments. There are several things I want to say about this.

First of all, they are effectively killing those voices that have criticized governments in the past, irrespective of which political party was in government. Trustees all over have been an effective voice in keeping funding to education at the levels they should be. They are effectively killing those voices by making sure that trustees who are there don't run again, for a remuneration of \$5,000.

They are effectively killing parental involvement, which was driven by the energies of trustees who wanted

parental involvement because they knew that education improves for their children when parents are involved. In many boards of education it was through the work of trustees that we got parental involvement.

In my view what we have done in the Toronto Board of Education is legendary. I shouldn't say that no other board has done it, but we have done a tremendous amount of work because of the trustees, and they're killing that as well.

The Education Improvement Commission is a euphemism for a dictatorial superstructure. It has the power to abrogate the rights of parents and trustees, an unacceptable, dictatorial superstructure under the euphemism of Education Improvement Commission. I oppose it thoroughly and I'm hoping the parents will see that its powers are dictatorial in nature and not democratic at all.

I urge the separate school system and the teachers of that system to rally together with the teachers of the public school system to fight a common enemy, and that's this Harris government wanting to take \$2 billion out of education.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. Further debate?

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** It's a pleasure today to rise and participate in the debate on Bill 104 in the Legislature. I've enjoyed the comments of the member from the other side.

I'll take some time today, first of all, to correct the record for the information of those listening today. I participated in the debate on the first day of second reading, and I made a comment and perhaps some of the viewers phoned and said they weren't certain of exactly what I meant. I would refer to the Hansard of January 21 on page 6415. On request from members in the House to name the boards I was speaking of or referring to, I made reference to the director of the Durham Board of Education, Mr Grant Yeo, and the director of the Northumberland and Clarington Board of Education, Mr Dick Malowney, both of whom I have a great deal of respect for. 1550

My comments of that day were of a broader nature, but really I was referring to their being in total agreement, as far as I was concerned with speaking to them, with the boundaries that had been decided by the minister in the restructuring of the boundaries. In fact, I have it on good assurance that both directors are working with their partners to ensure that the transition to the new school boards of Peterborough, including Peterborough with Northumberland and Clarington, is moving along and they are having meetings.

But more to the point, if we bring up the debate on Bill 104, I think it's important to remind the viewers that it's An Act to improve the accountability, effectiveness and quality of Ontario's school system by permitting a reduction in the number of school boards, establishing an Education Improvement Commission to oversee this transition to the new system, providing for certain matters relating to the election in 1997 and making other improvements to the Education Act and the Municipal Elections Act, 1996.

This is the bill and I think the viewer today is being done a service. I think you have to look at this also as a



partnership. Taking the funding of education off the municipal tax base has long been a problem and I believe the province is now taking full responsibility. By taking full funding responsibility they're taking the full responsibility for having the highest quality education and the most accountable education system in Canada today.

In fact, it's all about students. Just recently there has been a number of changes in education, but if you think back to the previous government, the then minister of education — I had the greatest respect for him at that time — David Cooke implemented —

**Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside):** Well, you didn't say it then.

**Mr O'Toole:** No, I did. I was on record at that time suggesting very strongly that he — in fact, he started the education quality and accountability initiative, and I respect him for doing that. I did at the time and I think many of the boards were inquiring about what was meant by "education quality and accountability." That office is now in process, thanks to those initiatives and thanks to our government bringing those to action.

The other thing is the profession of educators themselves. You might recall the same minister of the day, David Cooke, brought in the initiatives that started the College of Teachers, so we take no credit except for bringing it from idea or concept into action. As we speak, each teacher in Ontario has been sent a package to participate in the election of that board of directors, and the majority of those will be teachers. That was long debated and finally brought in by this government.

The previous minister of education indeed tried to encourage boards of the time to downsize, to become smaller. He had a first initiative to encourage boards to do it, and then he developed a commission. The Sweeney commission was really started by the previous government. It was chaired by a Liberal and it was basically instituted by a previous government looking at and examining the number of elected trustees. I commend the previous government; in fact the whole exercise. What's completely different here is that this government is going about implementing those recommendations.

Basically, when you look at the restructuring, which is Bill 104, it's reducing the number of boards of education down to, I believe, 66. There were 163 boards, but it's a little complicated. I think only 129 of them were actually elected boards; the others are provincial boards. Of that mix of boards, the constitutional issues were fully recognized and fully respected. Those of the French-language boards and of the Catholic or separate school boards were respected as well. We've tried to make sure that each group that exists today has not been diminished, and I think that's been done respectfully and proportionately across the province.

I guess the role and duties of the trustee were brought about and were discussed even through the Sweeney report. As well, David Crombie discussed the role of trustees as part of the Who Does What exercise.

Bill 104 was the empowerment legislation to downsize the size of boards. I've said many times before that I currently have five boards of education in my riding of Durham East and that those five boards are basically going to continue to exist, with some differences in

boundaries. I might add as well that there is the Christian school movement, which I consider the sixth board. The Christian board I meet with as well, because they have issues with respect to public health and those other publicly funded issues they want to be part of, but I consider them as a board. They're a volunteer board of directors for high school and elementary school and basically they get no government funding. I have a lot of respect for that model and I think there's something to be learned from it.

Also with all respect in Durham, when you look at the provincial spending averages on education — I could look at some of my numbers here. By the way, when you look at the provincial averages in spending, Durham and that area — Northumberland, Clarington — is much below the provincial average, if not just at the provincial average, so it's not, in my view, punitive for that board. The remuneration for the boards: Many of the trustees in our area today aren't getting the advertised money we hear about Toronto boards: between \$45,000 and \$50,000. In fact, the trustees in our area are basically hardworking and work for something in the order of between \$5,000 and \$10,000, of which 25% is tax-free, so there would be a small change for them.

Today in our area all of the boards have a policy on parent advisory councils or community councils in the schools, and I believe all of them have councils today. Some of those boards are working through the issues of what their mandate and terms of reference are, but I'm pleased to say that parents have long wanted a role in the education of their children, a legitimate role without being full-time trustees, and to be involved at the school level as more than just perhaps escorts on bus trips or baking cookies or a hot lunch program, to have an active role, to assist the leadership in the school, the principal and teachers, as the legitimately paid-for, if you will, administrators of the school.

They're concerned about issues of school safety. There are issues of discipline, perhaps, issues of playground supervision and other issues in which parents have a legitimate role. After all, they're paying. At the end of the day the taxpayer, either municipal or provincial, the public, is paying for education, so it has to be accountable.

I think Bill 104 goes a long way to making the system more accountable. There are fewer boards and more responsibilities for those boards, direct responsibilities empowering the community councils at each school, giving them more clear direction — I think there'll be a discussion paper on that in March — also fully respecting that the funding of education is coming to the province. That isn't part of Bill 104, but you have to consider it as part of the disentanglement package, so there is an implication there.

I'm going to go through a couple of points here with the funding of trustees. There will be fewer politicians. Right now in Toronto, for example, I believe there are some 104 school trustees. When you compare that to the number of provincial politicians — 130, soon to be 103 — then there are certainly a lot of elected representatives being paid for and perhaps making them into full-time jobs. So there will be fewer trustees. I think what



I'm hearing generally from my constituents is that they're pleased that there are fewer trustees.

I would ask the viewer today to respond to that. I've been a trustee. In fact many of the members here I'm sure spent some time as school trustees and it was enjoyable. Most of the people, I found, were very loyal and dedicated to the real purpose. They're not educated as educators; they're educated as sort of policy-setters and good municipal representation but they're not educators. Today they're moving a little closer to almost micromanaging the education system. I'm told that in some boards it's their regular appearance in the schools, sort of perhaps interfering in the schools.

1600

The establishment of the improvement commission is also a very good thing. As we go through these changes, the boards have some decisions to make on the provision of service and the duties and responsibilities of the board. I think the commission has an important role there and I'm very reassured by the two persons just recently appointed: David Cooke, former minister, and Ann Vanstone. They've both expressed their views that may be somewhat different from the government's view, but I think they have the greatest interest in education and commitment to making sure that at the end of the day we have the highest-quality, accountable education system in this country, Canada. I'm very satisfied. The other members or appointments to that commission will send a very important signal to Ontario of just how committed our Minister of Education is to what he says here in the House.

You have to stop and listen to the quality, affordability, accountability. That's what the people of Ontario want. I for one want to make sure that means that quality for the student and the money that's required are in the classroom.

If you want to think these are rapid changes, I would take issue with that. I was just going through my old notes here, and we made commitments during the election — the people at home may recall this very famous booklet, the CSR document. I'm going to read from it what was our commitment on education, because it really fits very nicely into Bill 104.

"Classroom funding for education will be guaranteed.

"That does not mean that savings cannot be found elsewhere in...education.... Too much money is now being spent on consultants, bureaucracy and administration." Remember this was in 1994-95 that this document was developed. "Not enough is being invested in students directly.

"Our principle of 'classroom-based budgeting' will help ensure that this essential service is protected and, indeed, that excellence in education and training is enhanced."

We had a very important working document at that time that was called *New Directions, Volume Two: A Blueprint for Learning in Ontario*. I participated in one of those exercises, as many Ontario citizens did, and they elected this government to make sure there were changes made in education. If I go on — people were well aware of this document; they voted us into office — it says:

"...the idea that people run for school boards as a part-time commitment to make education better for our

children. Too many of today's trustees have become full-time politicians with a full-time salary, paid with our tax dollars."

Remember that the \$30,000 to \$50,000 incomes for trustees is \$30,000 or \$50,000 that doesn't go to the classroom. When I hear parents calling me, saying there isn't enough art paper or there aren't enough textbooks, I really wonder if there couldn't be a more efficient, more accountable way of providing every dollar we can possibly save, in these difficult times, for the classroom. I know parents who are constantly in a fund-raising mode at schools to provide books and photocopying paper and other kinds of school-based needs.

I'm going to repeat a very simple model of education funding. For example, the provincial average of education funding is something in the order of \$6,000 or \$6,200 per student. If you have 25 students in a class, that's \$150,000. I guess you could say the students in that class, 25 of them, have to get to school, so we need busing. Let's give them \$100 a month times 25 students for 10 months; that's \$25,000 for busing, roughly. The teachers certainly have to be paid, and they need a good salary for their 10 months in the school room, and nobody is disputing that they don't work hard at all, but they are there 10 months. Not many jobs today are that long. Let's say they get \$50,000 or \$60,000. We've got \$25,000 for busing and we've got \$50,000 or \$60,000 — there's still \$75,000 left for that classroom. You could give each student \$1,000 for photocopying, for textbooks and still — what's happening?

Look at that model, if you like, at a school level. Let's say that in the school there are 500 students and that each student gets the \$6,000. That's \$3 million in that school. That's \$3 million for 500 students. I'm sure if you look at school-based budgeting and management and parents involved, they will help to make the choice to make sure that we have the highest-quality education in that classroom. That's what we're trying to do: eliminate the duplication and waste.

What is happening, however, is that at one of the boards there are some 25,000 students today. They throw in \$150 million at the board level and they tell me there's not enough money left for the classroom. I just don't go for that; I don't go for that at all.

If we look at the affordability level, I think the province is looking to do more with less — there's no question of that — starting with the trustees. But they're also looking at other changes to the school year which have already happened in Bill 34, one of our previous pieces of legislation, which introduced the elimination of the fifth year, the OAC year, of high school. I think there are other changes. This document, as I said before, is sort of a prelude to Bill 104. There's no surprise. Much of this was expected.

What the people of Ontario should know is that between 1985 and 1995, total enrolment in our schools went up by some 16%, and inflation would add about 40% to the cost of education. But school board spending in that same period, between 1985 and 1995, went up over 80%. Imagine: 80% spending and yet the enrolment only went up by 16%. The property taxes on education — I had, when I was a councillor, people continually



calling me and saying, "How come my taxes are going up every year?" an average of 3% to 5% every year on education across this province. In fact in that 10 years the municipal taxes went up 120%. Those were clearly unsustainable and a system that needed to be brought into check, and I think this legislation allows us to do that.

Bill 104, with the school boards and the councils, each school will have a clear direction of what its budget is, each student's entitlement, and also the ministry responsibilities will be much clearer. They are going to measure the outcomes. With the Education and Quality Accountability Office, we're going to have standard testing across the province to see indeed if what the children are being taught they are learning.

Education to me, as a parent with five children and my wife is a teacher, we cannot screw this up. In fact it's one of the most important initiatives this government has taken, and I for one will not stand by and see it ruined. Indeed, having been a trustee, a parent and a person who has always had an eye on education, I believe we are doing the right thing to improve the quality of education in Ontario.

I want to bring to people's attention that the funding of education is a part of this, as we've talked about, but that certainly in Ontario it has been a mixup. We're taking about \$5.4 billion off the municipal tax bill. That's what municipal taxes contribute from the residential side to education funding today. On my tax bill at home — let's say my tax bill is \$2,400 — approximately \$1,600 of it goes to education. The other part goes to municipal or regional. Every person who's at home, \$1,600, approximately, of what you're spending in taxes is going to education. That's changing.

When this law that we're debating here, not this one but Bill 106, the disentanglement one, when that comes into play — I must qualify — when it is in effect and fully voted on, the province will be committed to funding education. That means your tax bill at home will go down by some \$1,600. But it won't go down. We're moving services to the municipal level under this disentanglement, if you want to call it, or swapping, so that it equals the same amount that we're removing from the tax bill.

But that's not new. I want you to understand that Ontario spends as much or more — the numbers we get are some \$300 to \$500 more per student than any other province in Canada, so starting at that point, I don't think we'll be spending less than any province but certainly we'll be spending as much as any province.

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How does it work? If you look across the provinces, for example, British Columbia — I think they have about 500,000 students — 95% of their funding is from the province today. The same can be said of most provinces. New Brunswick at the other coast I know is also funded by the province, and just recently we all know that New Brunswick did change and —

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** A Liberal government.

**Mr O'Toole:** It was a Liberal government indeed that made that very wise choice. Actually I think they have two school boards now in the province. I'm not sure they're elected. I think they're elected parents from community councils.

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** What's the population?

**Mr O'Toole:** If you compare the population, I guess Ontario is by far the largest jurisdictional area. I think there are some two million students in Ontario, I believe that's the number, and I think there are some 5,600 schools approximately in Ontario. So our system, with a total spending of some \$13 billion to \$14 billion in the elementary and secondary level in Ontario represents a significant difference.

When you compare us to New Brunswick or to British Columbia, we're more than double or three or four times as large, so our changes are very much more important in terms of dollars. But really, each school individually is where we should focus. We shouldn't be lost because of the size. Each school and each child must be treated fairly, whether they're in northern Ontario, whether they're French language, or southern Ontario or public or separate. That's what we're doing: We're providing the funding dollars on an equitable basis across Ontario.

Also addressing issues that other people have called me on, on special education there will be specific grants recognized in the new formula; also for French as a second language or English as a second language, recognizing the changing demographics in large cities like Toronto, Ottawa, Kingston. Where there are ESL problems, there will also be specific funding directed to those areas as well.

Clearly we are very much in line. We're also very much providing a leadership role for many other provinces. I was just reading a little bit during the Christmas vacation period that Quebec is now under education reform, looking at governance and funding and looking very closely at what Ontario has just been through.

To repeat for the people listening today, the fundamental changes in education today are not new. They were issues when I was first elected as a trustee in 1982. Many of the changes today have been long overdue and very few people who have been involved would not know that. In fact, at my first opportunity to attend one of the conventions in Toronto I met my peers from across the province and got talking and I thought, "Gee, this is rather elaborate, all travelling to Toronto from all over the frigging province," and this was just one kind of organization —

**Mr Gerretsen:** All over the what?

**Mr O'Toole:** All over the province of Ontario.

**Interjection:** Frigid province.

**Mr O'Toole:** Frigid province — and I gather it was going on in the public and separate boards. I'm sure that each one of those dollars for hotel rooms and meals and flights etc were dollars that would be best spent in the classroom. When you have a system that's going up and up and up — and education funding over the last few years has been going up an average of 3% to 5% a year — it's about time that somebody brought it into order.

I really think that this issue on amalgamating boards is the right thing to do. I remember as a trustee that there would be an average of 1.25 meetings per week. This was a board with some 15,000 students and I think we had around 25 schools, I think we had three high schools — a large geographic area. We used to say the board was



the same size as Portugal, so there was a lot of travel involved to meetings and to visit schools as invited, but I think they did it very frugally. In fact, if you look at the funding summary on the Sweeney report, you'll find that there were quite a few boards educating students for well under \$6,000 per student.

Those same students will, by the way, need to have the right training and skills to be able to sustain their own life by finding a job and meaningful employment or post-secondary education. Whether the children live in Toronto or Thunder Bay or Timmins or Tweed, they need to have fair access to education and it has to be done in such a way as they can provide for their own future. They'll all be applying to the universities or wherever, the colleges. So they need, whether they live in Toronto or not — I can't for the life of me believe that in some areas we're spending in excess of \$8,000 per student. When I look at some students getting \$5,400, what's the difference between the \$5,400 education per student and \$7,000 or \$8,000 funding per student? Can that all be explained by ESL or can it all be explained by inner-city problems —

**Interjection:** New math.

**Mr O'Toole:** It's certainly a new math issue, that's certainly right. But I think what we're looking for here is equity and accountability and, again, as the funding model emerges and that consultation process is going, I think the parent councils in the school will be very involved in deciding where that discretionary funding is spent within the school.

I think there are some other kinds of improvements that can be made. As I flip through my notes here — I want to stay on topic. The key thing here is focusing on the role of trustees. If the province is going to be funding education, much of the looking at mill rates and the budget and all that kind of thing that trustees spend a lot of time doing — very important time, I might add, and they were well-intended — that's being changed.

In fact the province is going to fund it so now they don't have to worry about mill rate or mill rate adjustments any more — that's going to be done for them — so they can focus primarily on education, and that's what they should be focusing on. I think the trustees will be pleased at the end of the day to say, "Look, I'm here because of a genuine interest as a citizen," whether they are retired people or whatever, "to provide the best education for our children."

I think the sharing of governance of the boards of trustees with the parent councils is an important emerging legitimate activity. There will be more than just passing responsibilities. I think there will be absolute rights for these elected community councils. We must all guard against those community councils being — some have said to me that they could be hijacked by special interest groups. I certainly don't want that to happen in my riding. I don't think anyone does. There is an inherent community responsibility to make sure it's truly representative of that community and its needs. In fact I think the trustees should try to attend the meetings and have some communication link with the board, the community councils.

I believe the community councils should have students on them. Certainly if it's a secondary school, I think if

there is a five- or 10-member council, the principal would be the key presence of management and education, and perhaps another teacher, a special education or resource of some sort, but parents and perhaps students definitely have to have a role. It's almost like it could be a co-op work experience for them, if they took real responsibilities for being the treasurer of that committee or keeping the minutes and publishing the minutes of those meetings. I think there are some real, serious opportunities for that to be an effective, meaningful use of people's time, and very much related to their communities.

Schools are one of the access points for community, and who knows? When I think of schools, they are really the gateway to community for young families. For many of them, with their first child and first days at school, getting into the school and becoming involved is their gateway into the community.

There are many issues that come forward, some of which aren't particularly educational, where the school council and the structure within the school can provide access to other community services. In the future, rather than having 185 school days, perhaps the school could be open all year round. Perhaps it could be involved in the social programs, with day care. In some of our schools today we have a kind of an imbalance where some have day care facilities and some don't. I think much can be done.

Certainly the whole community has a role to play. I think there was recently a book written by somebody in a prominent position that says it takes a village to raise a child. Well, I certainly think this is a good starting point, where trustees aren't over here, parents over here and students down here. I think we're in this together, and if you think of it at the school level, it's an opportunity for each one of them.

I look at the policy memorandum —

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Thank you, time has expired. Questions and comments?

**Mr Gerretsen:** There are a number of points that I would like to just comment on. First of all, on this whole idea that a lot of money can be spent if we just get rid of the trustees or that the trustees are spending all the money and making exorbitant salaries, I think it's fair to say that most of the trustees — probably about 90% to 95% of all the trustees in the province — probably wouldn't be making \$5,000 per year. I see the member even agrees with me on that. The amount of money you would be saving as a result of getting rid of a number of these trustees is minuscule; it simply isn't important and it's a red herring.

1620

The other interesting comment he made was about attending conventions. The moment you start talking about conventions, a lot of people get very icky about it. They'd just rather stay away from the issue because, after all, people are there to have a good time, among other things. But the main reason people go to conventions, let's face it, is in order to exchange ideas with people who are in similar positions, whether it's trustees, whether it's municipal councillors, whether it's any kind of profession etc. I would dare say there is more good interaction and information exchanged during conventions



than probably at any other time. That's the value of conventions.

He also talked about parent councils. Parent councils are all right. There's nothing wrong with them except that they have severe limitations. Number one, there are people other than just the parents of children who attend those schools who have an interest in the system. Where do they fit into this whole system?

The other thing I would just like to remind the member of and which I think he ought to seriously consider is, if you don't set the proper kind of parameters for these parent councils, if you don't set their terms of reference, if you don't properly delineate exactly what you want these parent councils to do, you're going to reach the situation very quickly where they're going to want more and more authority and power, which may be all right, but you'd better worry about that before you set them up.

**Mr Marchese:** The member for Durham East talks about how change is overdue, how we need to do something, and makes it appear as if somehow amalgamation is going to save a whole lot of money that is going to go back to the classroom. All of that is a sham, bafflegab; it's not what they're after. This is a real assault against the Metropolitan school board and its various cities. It's here that people earn more than \$15,000; outside they earn less than that. It is in Metro where we have built great models for involvement.

Trustees in the Toronto board, where I was at, were full-time. I quit teaching to do this as a full-time trustee. Why? Because if you were part-time, as the member for Durham East or others might have been, you are essentially useless, because if you go there for one or two board meetings, you have nothing to contribute to that board, nothing at all to contribute to those students. You would have nothing to say to help them out. Unless you are there on a full-time basis to actually involve parents, your role as a trustee is essentially useless. That is what this government and this member are effectively doing to the new trustees, rendering them ineffectual, useless, because you cannot be helpful by simply getting \$5,000 to go to a board meeting.

The real agenda of this government is the following: to take billions of dollars out of the educational system. This whole thing is a veil. There is nothing in this veil that creates a more effective and more accountable educational system at all. There is nothing in there about that. The effect of this is to go after the teachers, to render trustees useless and to make sure parents are not involved in the education of their children. That's what it's about.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I was waiting to hear in the member's speech his comments on the advertising campaign that is being carried out by the Ministry of Education at this time and was quite surprised he didn't mention that, because that is costing the taxpayers of Ontario \$650,000 to see the Premier come on the television screen, money being paid even by people who are opposed to what the Premier is doing and yet are forced to fork over those tax dollars in order that they may be in a position of promoting the government position.

I asked the Premier in the House yesterday if he would withdraw these self-serving, clearly partisan, propaganda

ads on the part of the government and if he would return that money to places such as the classroom, because that's an expenditure outside the classroom.

I wondered as well if the Premier would pay back, through the auspices of the Conservative Party of Ontario, the \$300,000 to \$400,000 it cost to produce the pamphlet put out by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

So in a sense of fairness I know that there are some members of the government who would be asking the question, "If the opposition is unable to do the same with these ministry funds, then isn't this unfair?" Of course it is, and the ads are clearly propaganda ads. That's why I'm surprised my friend didn't mention that.

This exercise, when it was announced by the minister, of course was designed to blast those who have been involved in education, many of whom have dedicated years of their lives to education, whether as trustees, whether as administrators, whether as teachers, or whether as others interested in education. This will appeal to the right-wing, Fraser Institute types. I notice that Conrad Black yesterday endorsed Premier Harris and is making sure at the Ottawa Citizen that he makes an editorial board which is fully in compliance with what Harris wants.

**Mr Len Wood:** Briefly, the member for Durham East in his address didn't say that what this is all about is a way of taking \$2 billion or \$3 billion out of education so that it can be given as a tax break to the wealthiest people in this province. We know that when mega-week started on January 13, the Mike Harris government was having a problem. Their numbers were not adding up and they needed dollars quickly in order to be able to fulfil their campaign promises, which were to reduce the deficit and balance the books and give a 30% tax break to the wealthiest people in Ontario.

In Cochrane North, eliminating school boards and forcing the new trustees who are going to be elected to travel from North Bay to the other side of Hearst, which is a distance of over 300 miles, 350 miles — for this area to be considered as a district school board doesn't make any sense to the people in northern Ontario. All it means is that Snobelen is giving a snow job to the people and saying, "If we could change the boundaries for the school boards, get rid of a number of trustees, there's going to be a saving, there's going to be more money going back into the classroom."

All we know is that property taxes are going to skyrocket; they're going to go right through the roof. There are going to be less dollars spent on classroom education, because we know that they're saying junior kindergarten is not important. Physical education is at risk. We know they're going to bring in legislation within the next couple of months that is going to bring collective bargaining under Mike Harris and John Snobelen, which is going to mean a rollback of the salaries of the teachers.

It's all designed to pay for the advertising campaign. When you open your TV and you see Mike Harris on there, somebody's got to pay for this. The taxpayers are paying for it and property taxes are going to go right through the roof as a result of this Bill 104 that's brought in.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Durham East, you have two minutes.



**Mr O'Toole:** I'd like to just categorically go through and sort of rebut each of the members.

The member for Kingston and The Islands, for example, said — and I agree with him; probably he's right — that 95% of the trustees do make considerably less than \$5,000. They still ran for the job or the position, and they work very hard at it. So I think that's probably a reasonable amount that they should be paid.

Some have made it into a full-time job. To the member for Fort York, I take great exception with his interpretation. If someone is not making it a full-time job, in his view, then he dismisses them as useless or trivializes them. That's basically what he's saying. I know many of the trustees outside of Toronto, in fact all over — take, for example, Cochrane North — mention how difficult it is even today for trustees in northern Ontario — I agree with you — to travel great distances at great personal inconvenience to these meetings and to interact with their peers and their schools. So he was trivializing you as well, and I think you should take exception with him outside the House. Set him right that it's not useless for people to volunteer their time and their interest in the students of Ontario. It's absolutely critical.

And to respect the member for St Catharines, whom I have a lot of respect for, he comments on pretty well everything in the House, but he's right off the mark on this advertising campaign. We've heard a lot about the amount of money. I think we have a duty to communicate with the people of Ontario. But I'll have you know that the Liberal Party when they were in government spent \$24 million in advertising. The NDP spent \$16 million. Our budget is 30% to 50% less; we're spending a mere \$8 million. But there is a duty to communicate with the people of Ontario.

I think these changes are eminent, important and something this government has had the courage to bring forward for the students and the teachers of Ontario.

1630

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Patten:** Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the debate this afternoon. I'd like to say right at the top that this bill, Bill 104, is really part of an overall government strategy which is an assault on the education system. All the background related to the explanation for the justification of the restructuring fakes a crisis in education. It exercises myths and myth-making that all school boards somehow squander money by using isolated examples to the extreme which are not typical and not representative. It scapegoats school boards and trustees, and the minister uses examples of some of the school boards and what they have — again extreme examples, not typical, not your average school board — and of course it dismantles the education system to force cuts.

Why would the government do all this? My colleagues have already identified that they're under tremendous pressure in their budget to find extra money in order to fund that 30% tax cut. We didn't have an economic statement; we just had a report to the finance committee from Mr Eves because there are problems. That's code for "there are problems in caucus for the government," because a lot of members know when they go back home

how much they're getting beat up by some of the policies, especially in education.

*Laughter.*

**Mr Patten:** Some of my colleagues chuckle, but I know they know it's true.

This legislation is no different in a certain vein than Bill 34. Bill 34 was a bill that enabled the government to cut funding to two important areas: junior kindergarten and adult education; two classrooms, I might add, that the government chose to cut. That was part of the money they wanted to find, the \$400 million annualized to \$800 million that the minister has explained and agreed to.

Bill 104 begins to finish the process of getting at Ontario's education structure, the structure of governance. Bill 104 does what the minister's toolkit in Bill 34 did not do: It brings the education system to its knees, to extract, when all is said and done, something in the neighbourhood of \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion less for education. Imagine what could be done with that. Imagine how that could contribute to quality.

The justification for the legislation is cloaked in half-truths, exaggerations, scapegoating and number-fixing. The minister's opening remarks belie this point. For example, the minister states that his reform "will be a great relief to residential property taxpayers...who...have been singled out...." The minister knows this only too well because he increased property taxes last year through ministry regulations.

The first assumption is: Why was it that many people supported taking education off the property tax? To me it's very simple, and I haven't heard anyone else say this: Because they didn't want to pay it. They thought they would receive that money themselves and they'd keep it in their own pockets. Why else? They thought they'd keep that money, but of course we all know that's not going to happen. Property taxes were increased by a total of \$335 million last year as a direct result of the Minister of Education's initiatives.

The minister goes on to state as well in his comments, "Taxpayers are also questioning what they're getting in return for an ever-increasing tax bill." He's presuming — well, there has been an increase in the property tax for education, no doubt about it, but what is it that people receive in return? The answer is that they receive more educational services, many that were mandated by the provincial government. They have received more services because the provincial government has mandated many more.

Instead the minister tries to incite opinion by pointing to lavish administrative buildings and certain examples in the extreme which are not typical. The reality is that there are services that didn't exist 10 years ago, in and about that period: special education integration, early childhood education, health and social services not offered locally, technical advances, business practices, multicultural pressures, second-language training. Of course, you must remember the extension of full funding to the separate school board. This made a dramatic impact of course on the costs overall.

I suggest and ask that the minister stop fanning the flames. The minister knows full well that this is the reason. He even refers to these different needs later in his



remarks touting the new funding model. Here he says that the cost of educating students, including "special circumstances...such as students with special needs and students in remote communities" — or how about "the concerns of urban boards such as Metropolitan Toronto" — don't forget the Ottawa Board of Education — "which are the largest recipients of new immigrants not only to Ontario but to Canada, and of smaller boards such as Kirkland Lake-Timiskaming District Roman Catholic Separate School Board, which must meet the highest costs of transportation and heating." These are some of the examples of why costs have increased. But this does not of course fit the minister's agenda and therefore he will attribute it to other things.

The minister states that he is "streamlining the structure...and refocusing resources on the classroom." In fact, he's dismantling the structure and reducing resources for the classroom. That will be the end result.

According to the minister's own report on school board spending, "True administrative costs only amount to, on average, 15.7% of spending by boards." So all of the other indications of inside classroom spending and outside classroom spending are smoke and mirrors to try to fuzzy the waters and give the impression that there is either neglect or considered waste in the system. Even the Sweeney report, which was forced to use a flawed definition of classroom spending, found that in 1994 "true administrative costs only amount to, on average, 18% of spending by boards." No matter how the minister tries to mix the numbers, administration is never a major cost in the system.

The minister goes on to state as well, "We are also committed to improving the quality of education at less cost to the taxpayer." This means that they're taking money out of the system. That's what, "We are also committed to improving the quality of education at less cost to the taxpayer," really means.

Last year's level of provincial support for education as a percentage of property tax support is the lowest of any government since at least 1975. In fact, we are now at the same level of funding as we were back in 1990, and obviously the minister isn't finished yet. He hasn't found all the money that he wants. In 1990 there were 12% fewer students, and yet we're at that particular level and the minister is saying this is a wasteful system and we need to spend less. We all know that less invested in education over the long haul actually means more for us if we take a global view, if we take a long-term view.

The minister also states that he wants to ensure the "reforms take place in an organized and careful way." Then why is he rushing through the legislation so quickly? There are no specifics in it. He has put the cart, in my opinion, before the horse. Put forward specific proposals and let's debate them.

1640

Bill 104 gives the government virtually unfettered power to establish and to alter at any time, by regulation, such critical matters as the number of school districts and their geographic configurations. The only limitation on this regulatory authority is that the number of trustees not be less than five or greater than 22 for a particular board.

Even the name of the legislation, as has already been identified by a number of speakers, is a misnomer. The

minister knows too well it's a misnomer. That's why he only refers to it as the Fewer School Boards Act. He does not use the full title. I would like to read the full title: An Act to improve the accountability, effectiveness and quality of Ontario's school system by permitting a reduction in the number of school boards, establishing an Education Improvement Commission to oversee the transition to the new system, providing for certain matters related to elections in 1997 and making other improvements to the Education Act and the Municipal Elections Act, 1996.

There is nothing in this that improves accountability. The fact is that there is diminished accountability. The delegation of considerable authority to cabinet to make regulations and the broad powers vested in the Education Improvement Commission significantly removes any degree of control over this process, or as a significant partner, from elected officials, being the trustees, especially during the transition period.

The only issue of accountability is that hopefully the public will realize that the Minister of Education, not the school boards, was responsible for last year's property tax hike and that the Minister of Education is responsible for the reduction in education resources.

The system wasn't broken. The minister says it is. It wasn't broken until he started putting his hands on it, and to make matters worse, he now wants, and I suspect will probably get, full control.

There is nothing about effectiveness. The creation of geographically large school districts will ensure that any saving on administration will probably be eaten up in trying to manage in a larger geographic area, due to travel, due to faxes, due to long distance, just to get some kind of sense of being face to face with parents and with students and with schools.

There is nothing that improves quality in this bill, absolutely nothing. Quality has been sacrificed for financial expediency; quality has been sacrificed for a tax cut that will cost more than \$5 billion.

That's what this is all about. It's about taking money right out of education, not redistributing it, not finding saving in administration and placing that to help the teacher reduce class sizes or anything of that nature. This money is gone, totally gone out of education. Some people forget that. For some reason they believe that this money somehow is just going to be redistributed in education, and it's not.

This bill is about control. The minister has come up with the ultimate solution, take over control, and of course that means he can give back less. This legislation has been seen and judged in the context of the government's search for money to pay for their income tax cut. That is what this exercise in large part is about: how to get money out of the education system. The minister is scapegoating locally elected trustees, trustees who are duly elected and responsible to the local property taxpayers. He is scapegoating them so that he can legitimize the seizure of power and control of all the purse-strings.

Under the guise of fewer boards, the minister is changing the economic structure of the education system to make everyone and every board more dependent upon provincial funding. That will allow the government to pull more money out of education.



Let me state that again: Every single board under the old model or any reconfiguration will be more economically dependent upon the provincial government. Let that sink in for a minute. You're saying, "Now why would we want to do that?" Well, if you control the purse-strings, you can give back less, and if you're looking for a couple of billion dollars for a tax break, you've got to get some from education, and that's what's going to happen. Says the minister, he's got to get it. There were alternatives, of course.

In the end, the education system will be contributing more than \$1.5 billion, maybe \$2 billion, but the minister, the wizard of words and fiscal magician, will claim that his changes have produced savings. That's a joke. Savings? Give me a break. Savings for whom? Savings for the Treasurer of course, so that he can then allow the highest level of income earners in the province to benefit the most. It hardly seems like a wise investment. It hardly seems like a good tradeoff.

Let's talk a little bit about Bill 104 and what it actually says. Under section 327, the legislation vests wide regulatory power in the cabinet to determine the method of representation and the conduct of elections to district school boards. The legislation grants a significantly ambiguous power to the cabinet to pass regulations on, to quote from the legislation, "such transitional matters as the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers necessary or advisable in connection with the establishment of district school boards." Where is the opportunity for local input? What's the mechanism? Where is the mechanism for discussion over boundaries?

Subsection 327(8) says, "A person who establishes a geographic area under a regulation made under subclause (3)(d)(ii) shall have regard to any relevant submissions made by any person." I guess this means that this is where the public can write to the Minister of Education or phone long distance, if they can get through — I don't know if there's an 800 number or not — and give their views, because it won't be worth giving views to the trustees any longer, especially during this period, and that those views can be taken into account. Is this the case or not? Who knows? We don't know for sure.

What about the method for electing trustees? Are the new supertrustees going to be elected at large or through a ward system? Section 327 says that the LG will make regulations for "the establishment, for electoral purposes, of geographic areas within the areas of jurisdiction of district school boards." Sounds like wards to me, but the minister won't give us a straight answer as to what it will be. He says only that the same system that is currently used will remain. Some are elected at large and some are elected by wards, so we'll see how this all turns out.

The immunity provisions vest significant legal authority in unelected provincial officials in respect of fundamental budgetary and other decisions of school boards. These are appointed people, the Education Improvement Commission. The minister just named two people, an ex-Minister of Education and an ex-chair of the Metro school board, people with a lot of background. I guess they'll carry on what the NDP started and they'll continue reducing the size of school boards. Mr Cooke is quite clear on what he's identified. He thinks it should be

less, so we know what his views are. I guess the government agrees and he's a good choice from their point of view.

The delegation of considerable authority to cabinet to make regulations and the broad powers vested in this particular group really make it function like a little junta. These aren't elected people, these aren't people responsible. They're in there to make judgements on the budget, what could be spent where, and in fact they have the tremendous power to limit what takes place. So the heavy hand of that commission, doing it of course for the government, will hang over the heads of elected officials, being the trustees duly elected.

1650

Take for example school construction projects. The minister announced with great fanfare that he had seen the light and was convinced that the school accommodation crisis in Ontario was important. He announced that this government was lifting the freeze he had put on construction and that it would spend over \$650 million over two years for new schools and renovations. So what's going to happen? The fact is that trustees are not allowed to approve construction spending, so effectively it means that all projects have been frozen again. All these words and gobbledegook essentially mean that we actually have a freeze again, but it's not called a freeze because it's been reduced. But they can't make a decision because now this commission will have that authority over which to preside.

School boards can't spend any money because the new Education Improvement Commission has to approve any spending. When questioned about this, the Minister of Education staff simply said that their hands are tied — can you imagine? — that it's up to the commission: "Pass it off on the commission. We have nothing to do with it." It's a government-appointed commission. That's interesting, because Bill 104 has been submitted in the name of the Minister of Education, so it seems to me he has some responsibility there, yet his staff say, "Our hands are tied." Is it a matter of hands being tied or a matter of hands being washed of responsibility?

This particular piece of legislation also identifies a number of labour issues that are as yet unresolved. It's not dealt with here but they're very important. Both the minister and this legislation are silent on what will happen to collective bargaining contracts when boards are merged.

Is the government going to override current collective agreements? We don't know. We'd like to hear from the minister on that. Will the new district school boards be empowered to negotiate collective agreements, including all terms and conditions of employment? We don't know that. Will the existing collective agreements be allowed to run to term? Silence. Will normal rules surrounding bargaining, as outlined in Bill 100 and the Ontario Labour Relations Act, continue to apply or is there another piece of legislation expected to come to somehow address this particular issue? Does the government intend to bargain directly with teacher unions, establishing a provincial salary schedule and provincial conditions of working?

The government's silence is not comforting on these issues. These are important questions because the



employees, the most important people in this whole exercise, the teachers, who day to day relate to our children, don't know. They just don't know.

I want to address an area that I think is quite important for people in my neck of the woods. I found it interesting that within 48 hours of the minister's unleashing his latest attack on the education system, the ministry was banging on the door of the Ottawa Board of Education demanding that they hand over \$31 million of locally raised residential property taxes to the government. These are tax dollars raised from property taxpayers in Ottawa for the purpose of education.

The minister talks about a cynicism among local taxpayers about how their locally raised residential property taxes are being used. Here's a prime example. The Minister of Education and the Minister of Finance want residential property taxes in Ottawa to be raised under the guise of education, but to send the money to Queen's Park to pay for the Conservatives' tax break. This is very important. They want the Ottawa board to raise local money from the residential property tax base to pay for the Conservative income tax cut. The Ottawa board doesn't receive money from the province. Local residential property taxpayers and business pay the whole shot. This all happened within 48 hours of the minister making his appointment.

This exercise is about taking money out of education. I say to the taxpayers in Ottawa that the provincial government will be stealing money that was raised and dedicated to education and will now go into the general pool, not for educational purposes, which it cannot do. I hope that board and the taxpayers there will take legal action against this government for that, if it was to be used.

They will find different ways. The minister said this. "We have our ways," he said. The citizens of Ottawa, you watch what will happen with that money, because that's your local money dedicated to education that will be used for other purposes, not for education. They have other ways.

What will they do? Maybe they'll try and say, "Maybe you as a board could pick up" — and they have to do this all within a year, \$31 million before the full implementation, which is in 1998. The money that's in there for the system now is from property tax, and it will be for 1997 too. It's still property tax because the implementation effect will not be immediate. I say to the property taxpayers of Ottawa who pay to the Ottawa board: Watch it. You're going to lose your money that you gave directly to make sure that quality education was going to take place in the Ottawa Board of Education.

There was a comment by the member for Durham East that I'd like to refer to, that Ontario's per pupil spending is now behind 40 American states and six Canadian provinces. The ranking of Ottawa per pupil expenditures compared to American and Canadian jurisdictions: In 1993-94 we were 29th; in 1994-95 we were 31st; in 1995-96 we were 46th. I guess we'll probably be in 60th or 63rd position at the end of this as we continue to reduce per pupil contributions.

The other point is that the minister in all of this never has provided a clear definition of classroom spending.

Instead, he tells tales about out-of-classroom spending. What the heck does that mean, out-of-classroom spending? It ignores many services that are fundamentally important to the teacher. It ignores, for example, the expenditures in libraries, which we know are vitally important. We know that many kids are helped and stay in school because of guidance counsellors. We know of course that custodial services have something to do with the cleanliness and the tidiness and the appearance of the classroom itself. But these are considered to be peripheral.

I'd like to close by quoting a few people. These views are not just my own. For example, Heather Jane Robertson said, related to this initiative:

"The only thing you can do quickly in education is damage.

"First, the change challenges the democracy of education. In order for a school system to be decisive, it must be made as close to the people as possible." With geographically larger boards this will be difficult.

"Meanwhile, funding decisions will be made at the provincial level and won't be subject to local concerns and priorities." It takes decision-making away from local people and the "mega-school boards could lose those savings, as school board officials are forced to travel great distances just to get face to face with their schools."

Randall Denley, who is a reporter with the Ottawa Citizen says:

"One of the biggest reasons for property tax increases was the continuous failure by the Ontario governments to properly fund education. The province has cut grants for years, leaving boards with few options to pay the bills."

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** For years when you were in cabinet?

**Mr Patten:** No, not during our period.

"To blame boards now, without acknowledging the province's role, is deceitful," says Mr Denley.

"As an example of what school boards have been doing, we cite the Carleton Board of Education. Between 1991 and 1995, the board reduced spending in all areas by an average of about \$8 million a year."

Lynn Peterson from OPSBA calls the overall legislation a "tax and power grab." "Gone will be the days when parents have a say in how their educational tax dollars are spent. Queen's Park will call all the shots on how much is spent on the student programs and the services of its choice." She predicts taxpayers will eventually see an increase on their property tax bill, as municipalities try to contain costs for such services as social assistance.

My time is up. In summary, I'd like to say that in part this legislation is a mask to provide the tools for the Ministry of Education and the minister to take money right out of education that we will never see again, and it will hurt education to the core.

1700

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Questions or comments?

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** To the member for Ottawa Centre, I listened to the presentation he gave to the House in regard to Bill 104, and I was interested at the very beginning, the whole preface of what he set



up in regard to this debate. If you were to listen to the government, as the member points out, the government is doing this for reasons that are fairly — how would you say? — of good intention is what the government is trying to tell you. But I think the member points out quite correctly that really what this government is doing is a couple of things: They're taking over education finances for a very simple reason, so that they will be able to control education directly.

Now if there was a government in place that had a commitment to public education that would bother me but it wouldn't terribly upset me. The problem I have is that this government, listening to the Minister of Education, has very little confidence in our system of public education. In fact the Minister of Education is on record, on being sworn in as Minister of Education, as saying that he wants to create a crisis in our system of public education so that he's able to justify the changes that this government wants to make in public education. At every attempt, at every opportunity, the Minister of Education has denounced our system of public education, has done nothing to acknowledge the good that our system has, has done nothing to acknowledge that many boards in Ontario are among the best boards in the world when it comes to delivering education.

What this government is really trying to do is take over education, not to do the kinds of things that need to be done around consolidation in order to find the savings so you can reinvest it back into our system of public education to make it better. This government is trying to take over education for a very simple reason: He who controls the purse-strings calls the shots. This government has no commitment to public education and wants to move the way of private charter schools, and what better way to do that than to take over the system in its entirety and then do the devastation work that they want to undertake.

**Mr Baird:** I would say in response to my colleague the member for Ottawa Centre that I would agree with him that we do have a good education system in Ontario. I think, though, our goal should be to try to do the best job we can possibly do, that we would like to have a goal of being the best system, and we want to be able to look every taxpayer in the eye and say that every single dollar we're spending we're spending wisely and well. I think too often we can't say that.

In my riding the Carleton Roman Catholic school board spends 40% less than one of the boards on the other side of Baseline Road, and people have got to ask themselves why one board can spend 40% less than the board across the street and have just the same ratio with respect to children with special needs, have higher transportation costs and so forth. That is quite an indictment indeed with respect to financing.

The international assessment of education progress test, written in the spring of 1990 — when the results were released in 1992, what did it say? It said that while we're the top spenders on education, we are certainly not the top performers. In a recent international math test conducted on 13-year-olds, Canada placed at the bottom half of participating countries. Within Canada Ontario's English students tied for second last and Ontario's French students came in dead last.

The Premier of the province of the day said: "Tests show clearly that we have problems. I don't think anyone in the school system can look for excuses." Who said that? Bob Rae said that. How did the Liberals respond, the then Liberal leader? "Blame the NDP government." But that seemed hardly fair, given that the tests were done under the previous government.

But the quote that I think best sums up the issue is an individual who said, "Lack of resources was not a factor," as Rae said at the time. "In Canada we spend per capita more than most other places in the world. I think it's a question of focus and a question of how we get the system to do its job." I think that is a clear example that even Bob Rae acknowledged that finances was not an exclusive issue.

**Mr Bradley:** We've heard a lot of myths from the government side, so I'm glad to hear the member for Ottawa Centre come forward with the truth at long last. I've been waiting for this. My friend from Durham East gave his point of view. I'm not saying it wasn't true, but it was a point of view I don't necessarily agree with. My own member I think was educational to members of the House because he recognized, and I could see it being woven through his speech, that the whole exercise we're involved in here of cutting classroom teachers and removing special education assistants and so on, all of that is to feed the tax cut.

This government is so obsessed with this, you're in so much trouble now trying to find money because of this ill-conceived tax cut for the richest people in our society that you're making cuts that your non-cabinet members never thought were possible, never contemplated them. I remember the Treasurer, Mr Eves, saying after his last budget, "That's the end of the cuts." Then I find out that we're going to have even more cuts, and I find out — my Conservative friends phone me up. They say, "Is it really true that the government is going to borrow \$5 billion a year to finance a tax cut, and didn't the Dominion Bond Rating Service say this was ill-conceived?" and I say yes.

I keep listening carefully, because I remember the member for Wellington and the present Speaker and the member for Grey-Owen Sound and Morley Kells, the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore, all said this was crazy, this tax scheme was crazy. That's what this is all about, and my member certainly brought that to our attention.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** I always enjoy and learn when the member for Ottawa Centre rises and tells us a true story about what is being debated. Would you please set the clock, or do I have unlimited time, madam? Thank you.

The government would have us believe that a reduction at the trustee level, fewer trustees, fewer elected officials, will constitute significant savings, and they would have us believe, through the duplication, they say, that by reducing the number of administrators the taxpayers of Ontario will save a great deal of money.

Make no mistake about it: This is not revenue-neutral. To come very soon at a neighbourhood near you will be the following: The government will have both hands — actually, no hands. They will cut off their contribution as an employer to the teachers' pension fund, and they will say, "The pension fund has in excess of \$42 billion and the liabilities are fully funded, so why should we pay?"



Then what the government will do is negotiate directly with the teachers, because they feel that's where the money is. When they negotiate with the teachers — because, you see, teachers can no longer go to the school board. They don't have the power to levy, or they will give only so much to the school board, and you can't go to the taxpayers. When the government does that, it will remove the right to withdraw your labour, the right to strike, and then they will sock it big time: a 5%, 10% or 20% reduction in your wages. They will sap the morale out of the classroom.

They will get bigger, and then they will introduce a voucher system as a grand finale, coupled with a private system of schools. It is all so predictable, all so asinine and all so damaging.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr O'Toole:** Madam Speaker, on a point of personal privilege: The member for Ottawa Centre made reference to a comment I made in my remarks, and I would like, if possible, to correct the record. I was using spending numbers for students based on the —

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Durham East, take your seat, please. That is not a point of privilege. You will perhaps at a later date have an opportunity to clear the record for your own sake. The member for Ottawa Centre.

**Mr Patten:** I would be happy to hear the member's point following this. I'd like to say thank you to the members for Lake Nipigon, Cochrane South, Nepean, St Catharines and, for a very short while, the member for Durham East. I will hear those remarks later.

1710

I'd like to respond to two things. My friend the member for Nepean quotes some surveys and statistics, and I must say to him that every single survey I have seen and observed — and I think I saw most of them when I was the education critic — every single test I have seen, internationally or otherwise, always had some quality that was proven to be an unfair comparison. Because of the nature of our universal system, we provide opportunities for people of all backgrounds to have a public education, and that works against us sometimes in international tests where it's a very small élite who write these exams and they're already streamed into these areas of biology or math or whatever it is.

I would like to sum up today by saying that in the final analysis, every organization can always find ways of improving, and I hope boards do that. My worry is that I don't believe bigger is best. I would like to believe that any savings that were found went to the classroom — I think the members opposite would like to believe that too — but frankly everything I see suggests that whatever is found, it's gone. It's right out of education. We are now in 46th place — this is for the member for Nepean — related to all the jurisdictions in North America, which is not a very good position to be in.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. Your time is up. Further debate?

**Mr Len Wood:** It's a pleasure for me to speak on Bill 104. It's interesting that the title they put on it is very similar to a lot of other titles they put on bills: the Fewer Politicians Act, and now we're talking about the Fewer

School Boards Act. Most people don't have a problem with fewer school boards in some areas of the province, but when you look at northeastern Ontario and northwestern Ontario, when you have elected school board trustees who are going to have to represent areas all the way from North Bay to Hearst, it's going to be physically impossible to get around this area. It's another slap in the face for people who live in northern Ontario as they take away the democratic right and the democracy we used to have in northern Ontario.

It goes back to when Snobelen was first appointed to the cabinet and he called a press conference — or he was taped, anyway — saying that in order to get dollars out of the school system, we're going to have to create a crisis in the education system. This is basically what has been happening over the last 18 months: It's one crisis after another within the education system. With Bill 104, as I said, it might be okay in some parts of the province, but in northern Ontario to expect elected school trustees to cover that big an area just won't work.

People feel betrayed by a lot of things that are happening in this government. The Harris government's record in the north — the words people are using is that they've destroyed some of the north, that they've cut, closed, laid off, dismantled, downsized, abolished, reduced, chopped, shut down, wiped out, eliminated. These are the feelings people have about what Mike Harris and his people are doing to northern Ontario.

Now we see that they're going to close in and clamp the jaws tight on the city of Toronto. I understand a time allocation motion has been brought into this Legislature, has been tabled, where they're going to limit the public debate on amalgamation of the seven municipalities in Metropolitan Toronto. They're going to have no hearings outside of Queen's Park. My message to the people out there who want to make presentations on Bill 103, the amalgamation into a megacity, is to call the committee clerk and get your name on the record so you can make presentations on Bill 103. It's sad that they would do something very similar with Bill 103 as they did with Bill 26, the bully bill they brought in which allowed the cabinet ministers to take control of everything that is happening within this province.

A brief outline of what I see happening in Bill 104 is that it allows the government, through regulation, to create new types of school boards. As I said there, you're going to have one school board for English Catholics, one for French Catholics, and they're going to be all the way from North Bay to Hearst. It's going to be physically impossible for them to have meetings on a regular basis.

One of the main thrusts of dealing with education is that they want to take a few billion out of the education system. I met with students and teachers in Cité des Jeunes and they're concerned, when you consider what their speculation is, that libraries and physical education and guidance and other activities are not considered part of classroom education. The group I met with was very much concerned that if you eliminate physical education classes, where do the young teenagers who are 13, 14, 15, 16 get the education as far as nutrition is concerned, their sex education in schools? They're very upset and they videotaped the presentation, the questions they made



to me, and they're very much concerned. I support them in their plea and I encourage them to write to Mike Harris and to John Snobelen because these are the ones who are doing this.

We have a lot of notes that I've been very much concerned with when it comes to this particular bill.

On the mayor of Kapuskasing the headline is: "Kap Mayor Upset by Restructuring from Province." His argument is very simple, that if you're going to take education off the property taxes and you're going to dump all the other services on, whether it be long-term care, welfare, public housing, child care, land ambulance, public health, provincial highways, ferries, airports — I might point out that Hearst and Cochrane used to get funding from the province to assist them with their small airports. Last year the Minister of Northern Development and Mines decided he was going to cut their funding in half, and this year he's going to take away the rest of their funding from them at the same time that they shut down norOntair and destroyed the air travel we had.

Bill Davis — I'll give him credit there — 25 years ago decided that northern Ontario should be treated the same as everybody else in the province and established an airline and established good roads. Now we have a Reform-Conservative-Republican government that is taking everything out of the way. Imagine that when the Minister of Northern Development and Mines called a press conference and said, "We have a strategy for northern Ontario," and the reporter asked him, "Is that a strategy for northern Ontario or is it for all of the province?" he said: "That's right. I assume that we will have some kind of strategy for northern Ontario somewhere along the line."

This is the same thing that is happening with Bill 104. The Minister of Education and Training said, "Well, get it straight now — and he was talking to the bureaucracy — we have to create a crisis within the education system to be able to accomplish what we want to do," which is to take billions of dollars out of the education system. They already took \$400 million out last year, near the end of the year, and if you annualize that it came to about \$1.2 billion, I guess, that they took out. Now we find out that they find out they're going to have to take more out of it, and one of the ways of doing it is to bring in legislation that they have here in Ontario which is called the Fewer School Boards Act.

A number of other repercussions are going to come as a result of this legislation after it is passed. We know there are at least two or three other pieces of legislation that they're going to be tabling. One is going to be collective bargaining. Collective bargaining is going to be controlled and brought into the Premier's office or the Ministry of Education and changes are going to happen there. If you're going to reduce the number of dollars in the education system, how do you do it? Do you roll back the teachers' salaries through another piece of legislation that you're going to bring in or do you just increase the size of the classrooms?

1720

I have a lot of respect for teachers. My daughter Brenda is teaching in Hamilton on Hamilton Mountain, and my daughter Sandra is teaching in Mississauga. I get

an update from them on the size of the classrooms and what they think would be fair as far as the number of students they can teach. They let me know very clearly that if you put 40 or 50 students into a classroom, all the students cannot receive the information and educate themselves at the same level, so you're going to have problems.

We know we're having very little debate on the legislation that is being brought forward. As I said before, Bill 26 was tabled back in December 1995, and the Conservative idea was that they'd ram it through the Legislature. They brought back the Legislature one day in January 1996 and passed Bill 26, which opened up the door for all kinds of changes they're making.

As I said earlier, there's a time allocation motion that has been brought in now on Bill 103, which is the megacity legislation. It's an attempt to shut down the public debate that is happening on Bill 103. If a lot of people want to continue the debate on Bill 104, we know that eventually they'll bring in time allocation, which is a piece of legislation they bring in to shut up the people so they can't debate on second reading.

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North):** That is absolute nonsense, total nonsense.

**Mr Len Wood:** I know that some of the Tories are heckling because they as well don't like to see time allocation, because when you shut down the debate in this Legislature —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr Len Wood:** — then all of the Conservative backbenchers, their phones are going to start ringing off the hook. Their phones are going to be ringing off the hook because they're going to be —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Will the member for Brampton North come to order. Sorry. Come to order, please. Go ahead.

**Mr Len Wood:** It's not my problem if they're getting upset with what Mike Harris and Al Leach and Snobelen are doing in this Legislature. If they're upset with that, they should call —

**The Acting Speaker:** Take your seat for a moment. Could I remind the members to refer to the ministers and all members of the House by their riding, not by their name. Thank you.

**Mr Len Wood:** Thank you, Speaker, and I'd like to continue on Bill 104. As I said before, there were three main reasons for bringing in the Fewer School Boards Act: to allow the government, through regulation, to create four new types of school boards by replacing the existing school board system, and the four types are English public, French public, English separate and French separate; to set limits on how many trustees you can have on a board and who is eligible to run and how the election is to be conducted; to establish the Education Improvement Commission and give it the duty and the powers to oversee the transition of the new school board system.

I might point out that this Education Improvement Commission really is a trusteeship. The present 130 or 140 school boards that are there right now have all been



put under trusteeship retroactive to January 13. If they want to sell buildings or buy buildings or if they want to hire employees or whatever, they have to get permission from the Minister of Education. That trusteeship is going to continue on through till after the new school boards are elected and take effect on January 1, 1998. It will continue to the end of the year 2000, from what I understand. There are a lot of school board buildings which the administrators work out of right now that are going to be sold or dismantled or whatever. I don't have a particular problem with eliminating those, but I am very concerned and upset at the large school boards that are happening in northern Ontario.

Sure, we talked about whether property taxes are the right way to pay for education. We had some discussion during the five years we were in government: "Maybe this is not the right way to do it. Maybe there are too many school boards." But it was never our intention when we were in government to have school board trustees have to travel about seven hours from one end of the district to the other end to attend meetings so they could administrate the job they were going to be doing.

I have no problem with limiting the salary that a school board trustee can get, because we didn't have any full-time school board trustees in northern Ontario. They would get \$100 or \$200 or maybe \$500 a month to pay for the gas and oil and the wear and tear on the car when they were travelling to these meetings, so there are no big savings by eliminating 10 school boards within my riding and those of the members for Cochrane South and Timiskaming. There are no big savings by getting rid of all these trustees and having one or two big boards or four big boards that are going to cover the whole area. There are no savings whatsoever.

We know that when you go out and run a campaign as the Premier did — now he's got his cabinet in place and they made all kinds of promises. Some of the promises we thought were silly at the time. We still say their numbers don't add up. The only way they're going to be able to add up their numbers is to close down hospitals in large numbers, and they've already gone out and introduced video lottery terminals; if they have 35,000 of them across the province, this will give them an extra \$1 billion in revenue. But they're still short about \$3 billion or \$4 billion or \$5 billion to meet the campaign promises that they said they were going to fulfil back in 1995.

The only way they can do that now is to go out and borrow \$5 billion a year, give the tax break — they gave the first 7.5% tax break last July and, lo and behold, the Liberal government in Ottawa said: "We want that. We're going to increase the Canada pension plan payments, we're going to increase unemployment insurance payments and we're going to take all that back. Mike Harris and his group in Ontario are not going to get away with giving a tax break. We're going to get our share in Ottawa." So the Liberals in Ottawa have done that.

The other 7% or 8% that they're giving on January 1, I'm sure there are going to be other ways of gobbling that up. I know in my town a couple of years ago we used to pay \$3 for a parking ticket violation. I got a parking ticket violation the other day because I was tied up longer than I thought I was going to be at a meeting

with one of my constituents in my office and it cost me \$8 for a parking ticket. You're talking about increasing fees, and it's not the fault of the mayors and reeves. I don't blame the mayors and reeves.

We know what is happening. The Premier in this province is saying: "We don't think the Ontario government should be handling a lot of the services that are out there now. Whatever hospitals we can't shut down in Ontario, we'll pay for the upkeep of them and operate them. We'll pay for whatever schools we don't shut down. We'll pay for the balance of them out of the general revenue. But if we're going to do that, then we're going to force all of the mayors and reeves to look after policing in Cochrane, in Hearst." When the police changes are taking place, people are going to have to pay an additional \$250 a year. Hearst has a figure of \$229 a year. Some other areas are going to be more. If they want to have policing services, OPP services, they're going to have to pay for them. So that's another way of increasing the property taxes. We know they've turned over the water and sewer to municipalities. They're going to have to increase taxes to handle that.

Personally, my taxes were about 60-40, I believe, about 40% or 45% for property taxes and the other portion of it for school taxes. But now I know from listening every day in this House over the last 18 months that my taxes are going to be going a lot higher, and we have nobody representing northern Ontario from the government who is willing to stand up and say that this has gone too far.

We have the Minister of Northern Development, who calls a press conference and says: "Guess what? I have a strategy for northern Ontario. There's \$1 billion in a slush fund that's going to help the municipalities to deal with this." Then when he was questioned by one of reporters, they asked him, "Is this a strategy for northern Ontario?" and he said: "Oh, that's right. I assume that somewhere along the line we're going to have a strategy worked out for northern Ontario, but at this point in time we don't have one. All we're doing is cut, slash and burn and get all the dollars we can out of northern Ontario in order to give a tax break" and, as the member said, protect the members in the 905 region who are the makeup of this Conservative government.

1730

It's a sad day when we see that the government will stoop to all kinds of levels and tactics to get their agenda through when there is a swelling of opposition to this Conservative government. We know from the large meetings that have been held in the city of Toronto; we know that the Toronto board of trade has come out and condemned the Premier for pushing ahead with his agenda. They've condemned the Minister of Municipal Affairs, Al Leach, for dumping all these services on to the city of Toronto.

With the megacity happening and with all the dumping that has been taking place, my information is that residential property taxes, with the new megacity in Toronto and all the dumping they're doing on to them — the other services, public housing, long-term care, ambulances — property taxes are going to go up residentially about \$350 a year. Business tax is going to go up — hey, listen to this. Business taxes are going to go up \$7,900 in



the new megacity of Toronto if they're going to have to deliver all these services.

In northern Ontario I have mayors and reeves who have come forward —

**Mr Bisson:** It's 40% in Timmins, property taxes.

**Mr Len Wood:** If Timmins has to pay for all the services that have been dumped on them by the present Reform-Republican-Tory government in Ontario, property taxes will have to go up 40%, a 40% increase in the city of Timmins. You think the people in northern Ontario are happy with Mike Harris and his group that are dumping all these services on to northern Ontario and saying, "If you don't want to increase the property taxes, cut out the services"? We can expect to see a lot of services not being delivered.

We know that the particular bill that we're talking about right now is probably going to end up being the same as the bully Bill 26. They're going to bring in time allocation, they're going to ram it through the Legislature, they're going to limit public hearings. It's only about 40 minutes ago that this government brought in a time allocation motion on Bill 103. They're going to limit the public debate. They're not going to allow any public hearings to take place outside of this Legislature. Everybody's going to have to come down to Queen's Park, even though the seven governments have room for 200, 300, 400, 500 people within their buildings, so a committee of the Legislative Assembly could travel into these communities and listen to the public. But they're going to restrict them to here and they're going to limit it to about eight or nine days of public hearings, probably nine days of public hearings and one day of clause-by-clause, and then they're going to ram it through the Legislature and that'll be the end of the megacity for Toronto.

We expect the same thing is going to happen with the Fewer School Boards Act as they decide that the opposition parties are taking too long to debate and we're generating a public debate out there to the listening audience. The feedback that I was getting was, "There were a couple of good announcements come out." The Minister of Education is reannouncing the capital announcements that the NDP government did in 1994. They froze them in 1995 and 1996, and then in January they said: "We're going to unfreeze those capital dollars and we're going to build schools. We're going to get people out of the classrooms and everything is going to be okay. Don't worry about it."

They also made an announcement that the operating dollars were going to be stable for 1997 and 1998, and then all of a sudden they realized that they haven't got enough money to do all these things, so they bring in another piece of legislation, which is called the Fewer School Boards Act.

The students and parents are very much concerned about what the end result is going to be. Are we going to lose physical education? Are we going to completely lose junior kindergarten? Are we going to lose the guidance departments?

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Scarborough East, come to order.

**Mr Len Wood:** Are we going to end up with 40 or 50 kids in classrooms where teachers are only going to be doing crowd control? We don't know what is going to happen.

We know that they've put all the school boards as they exist right now, effective January 13 — it's retroactive to January 13 — under trusteeship. They're saying: "You've got the money. You've been able to raise the money and you've collected the money, but you're under trusteeship now until after the new boards are elected on January 1, 1998. And by the way, we might keep that trusteeship on for another three years after that. We might just keep it on until the end of the year 2000 to make sure that we can get all the money we need. We can't get enough out of VLT slot machines." Even if you put in 35,000 of them, all you can collect is about \$1 billion in taxes, revenue coming in.

This government, because of the promises they made during the last election, is short. They're short of money. They're coming back to all the people and they're saying: "You must have more money in your pocket. Come on, divvy up the money. We need this money if we're going to give a tax break to the wealthiest people in this province." Thirty per cent to somebody who's making \$20,000 a year or \$25,000 a year, most of that is going to be used up in user fees and increases in property taxes. But if you give a 30% tax break to somebody who's making \$300,000, \$400,000, \$500,000 a year and is the president of a bank, the top people, it's big bucks.

The government is saying that money is going to go back into the economy and create jobs. I've said to a businessman in the town of Kapuskasing, "When you get your 30% tax break, how many jobs are you going to create?" He said: "I'm not going to create any jobs. I'm going to take a trip to Florida or I'm going to do something else, but I'm not going to hire any other employees." Now the same businessman I was talking to is saying that he's not going to have any extra money in his pocket because of all the user fees that are being brought on. He's not a Conservative and he would never agree with the Conservatives. As a matter of fact, he's not NDP either, but he's a friend and I've known him for a number of years.

The legislation that is being brought in is a lot different from what we had proposed during our term in government. We had looked at that. We had the Royal Commission on Learning reporting back and there were some changes that we were looking at, but we would never think of bringing in this exact piece of legislation.

At the same time as we're talking on this piece of legislation, Bill 104, this education act, we find out that the government has brought in time allocation. This is to shut down the Legislature as far as debate is concerned on the megacity. They're going to limit the amount of debate here. They're not going to have any public hearings outside of Queen's Park. Everybody is going to have to come down to Queen's Park. I would suggest that anybody who is listening out there now, if they want to make a presentation on Bill 103, should phone the clerk and get their name on the list and make sure, if the Conservative government is not going to allow the opposition members in here to debate legislation for the



amount of time that we need, they can make a presentation to the committee.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Brampton North, come to order, please.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Cochrane South, come to order.

**Mr Len Wood:** I understand that they're upset with some of the action their cabinet ministers are taking and that the Premier of this province is taking and they're using their time to air it out here. But they should be using their time to get hold of the Premier of this province to say: "What you're doing is wrong, what you're dumping on to the municipalities is wrong. You're forcing municipalities to make decisions to increase taxes where you were not willing to do it yourself." They've sloughed off the responsibility for all the services, basically, with the exception of a few hospitals that are left after they get through all the hospitals they're going to close down, they're going to look after education, the schools they don't close down as a result of the different pieces of legislation they're bringing in.

1740

They're making it impossible for northern Ontario to deal with education when you look at the long distances. I drive from the town of Hearst to Nipissing or North Bay and it's a seven-hour drive. Now they're saying we're going to have a number of school boards in that area but they're going to cover that distance. It's impossible. The only people who are going to be able to sit on school boards and be able to take the time off work and represent the people are going to be the wealthy companies. The contractors or the large businesses out there will be able to say, "It's going to take you one day to travel there, one day for the meeting and one day to come back, so we'll allow you time off from work and we'll pay your wages because you're not allowed to receive more than a \$5,000-per-year honorarium."

As I said, a lot of changes are taking place here and I think we need further debate on a lot of these issues. I hope they wouldn't bring in time allocation on Bill 104, as they've just done on Bill 103, because it's a sad day when you shut down the debate in this Legislature and ram your legislation through without having proper public debate.

I know people are phoning the Conservative backbenchers and getting their message to them because I see them coming in here on Monday morning after spending the weekend in their constituency office and they've got long faces. It sounds like the constituents are starting to beat up on them.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth):** I'm pleased to be able to get up and say a few words about the speech of the member for Cochrane North. I was listening very carefully both here and outside to the way the words were put out, and the words were fine; the only thing was that some of the thoughts got mixed up in the sentences.

One of the problems was in this time allocation. It would seem to me that maybe the member for Cochrane

North forgot that it was his party that brought time allocation into this House.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Cochrane North, order.

**Mr Bert Johnson:** We have been told by the electorate, by the people in Ontario that they wanted to get education off of property tax. It has been there for well over a century, since the very foundation and beginning of this province. Many municipal politicians told us that it's not relevant to their budgeting to have to send out tax bills, with more than half the amount on them for education.

We've listened to the people of Ontario, we've come up with a better system, and I would like the member for Cochrane North to address some of those concerns about Bill 103 and Bill 104 and the impact and improvements that we have and we look forward to in the coming months for education for the kids of Ontario. After all, the education system wasn't devised for politicians, either provincial or municipal; the education system should and always will be, under our direction, for the kids of Ontario and their future.

**Mr Bradley:** I enjoyed the remarks of the member very much. I found them intriguing. I'm glad he made reference to the guillotine which is being applied by this government on yet another bill, which will affect this particular bill because of the timing of all legislation. That guillotine, of course, is going to significantly reduce the amount of time possible, as the member must have appropriately pointed out, for people to make representations on Bill 103, the megacity bill, which of course will affect the timetable for this bill. I think it's most unfortunate that the government has not agreed at this point in time to hearings in each of the municipal council chambers in Scarborough, East York, York and the city of Toronto, Etobicoke and North York. This is most unfortunate because that's where the people can make direct representations. That's why I'm pleased the member raised that issue.

As well, of course, we need much more extensive hearings than have been contemplated in this time allocation motion, which significantly reduces the amount of time that groups and organizations and individuals will have to make representations to try to persuade the government to avoid this madness of creating huge cities, which do not work in the United States. I think our people in this province can be legitimately concerned that, step by step, in every instance we are moving to the American system. We're going to have American cities, an American education system, and if you get your way, we're going to have an American health care system. Somebody has to call a halt to this, and we in the opposition will be vigorously opposing that.

**Mr Pouliot:** In response to the timely presentation from the member for Cochrane North, shortly before 5 o'clock today the government filed a notice —

**Mr Bradley:** A guillotine.

**Mr Pouliot:** — a guillotine, vis-à-vis Bill 103. They've shackled the opposition. Recall that it started with Bill 26, this way of doing business. They might as well come here one day and bring handcuffs and muzzles



for the opposition. You're entitled to so much, but never more. More than 600 concerned citizens, clubs, organizations, have made their intentions known to appear at the public hearings, but they're not providing the right of an audience. They have decreed that the citizens are to say little and preferably say nothing. The steamroller goes on and on in the way and in the ditch: "We will do what we said we would, come hell or high water."

These people are on the hook for a 30% tax cut that will benefit the likes of Conrad Black, and it's supposed to create jobs. When has Conrad Black created jobs? He hatches people. It fits their style. This is the kind of attitude they court. They wish that one day they too — but surely they're on the waiting list. It's being done to them.

Their school boards are about to disappear, fewer teachers, larger classrooms. That's what the member said, and he's right. The erosion of the middle class, polarization, the know/know-not difference, the haves and have-nots. They'll carry the guilt. Shame —

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr O'Toole:** It's a pleasure to rise and respond to the member for Cochrane North and his comments on Bill 104. I also want to take this opportunity to clarify some comments earlier on that in a report that was issued by the Ministry of Education reflecting a study done by Dr Stephen Lawton, the province of Ontario spent \$6,917 per student in 1995-96. These are statistics from Statistics Canada, and these data are citing that our spending today in Ontario is \$319 per student more than the aggregate of the other provinces.

If you take the spending in education today, which is really what this is about, of some \$14 billion; let's say it's \$13 billion. If you were to save just 5% of that —

**Mr Bisson:** Just get rid of that money, the students are getting too much. They are spoiled, they are getting themselves a good education. How dare those kids. Isn't that terrible?

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Cochrane South, come to order.

**Mr O'Toole:** — do you think there are any savings or efficiencies or economies in education? Just 5% of that would be some \$800 million.

Also, if you look at the subsidy to the teachers' pension fund, and other amounts of expenditures that don't go to the classroom, I think it needs to be re-examined. There have been over 25 studies on education finance since 1950. All of them have come up with recommendations that education funding should be a provincial priority and the province should fund education.

1750

If you look at the Royal Commission on Learning, the report when the previous government was in office, it clearly supported that the province should fund education. The Fair Tax Commission supported that the province should fund education. And I would suggest to you that the disentanglement report from some years ago suggested the same thing.

Again I say to the viewers today, what is different is that this government is doing what the people of Ontario want. Those who don't want it are those who are perhaps

benefiting from the system today. I honestly think the Minister of Education and Training is committed to quality education —

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. The member's time is up. The member for Cochrane North.

**Mr Len Wood:** In my response I just wanted to point out and thank the members for St Catharines, Lake Nipigon, Perth county and Durham East. We have a ticking time bomb that is out there as a result of taking education off the property taxes and dumping all of the other services that this government should be looking after. It's probably going to be a ticking time bomb out there with the time allocation motion that has been brought in on Bill 103 when there are hundreds and thousands of people out there who want to make presentations and want to hear the debate continue on Bill 103, and now they find out that this Conservative-Reform-Republican government is shutting things down.

I listened attentively to the member from Perth saying that he didn't agree with some of the things I was saying. I would hope he would be spending more time making sure that his hospital in Listowel and his hospital in St Mary's are not going to close, because when they close down, they're going to be coming after the member for Perth. They're going to be coming after him saying: "Why were you not there speaking up against Mike Harris's desire to shut down a lot of the hospitals and transfer all of these services over?"

I have relatives in northern Ontario and in southern Ontario, and I'm sure as property owners they're not happy to see their property taxes having to go up because of what Mike Harris is doing on this particular piece of legislation.

The teachers out there are not going to be happy when they find out that Education Minister Snobelen will probably bring in legislation that will roll back their wages because they need those billions of dollars to be able to give a tax break to the wealthiest people out there.

I hope this government does not bring in time allocation, the guillotine, on Bill 103 as they've done on Bill 104, and shut down the debate in this Legislature.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate.

**Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre):** I welcome this opportunity to debate the Fewer School Boards Act, 1997. This debate allows us to move beyond the banner headlines trumpeting mega-week and mega this and mega that, and to consider the changes we are proposing to Ontario's education system. I'd like to take this opportunity to reiterate why those changes are needed.

This government is committed to ensuring all Ontarians have access to a high-quality education, one that focuses resources on the individual, on students and teachers in the classroom. That is our fundamental goal, but we've stressed throughout all the changes that changes to curriculum alone are not the answer.

Previous governments have tried this. Time and again they've added new programs and priorities piecemeal to an already unwieldy foundation. In the end, these changes did little to remedy the underlying structural problems, and for too long these problems have been eroding our



system's ability to provide quality education that prepares our students for the future. In fact, they have further exacerbated the situation by diluting the focus of education and creating a funding system that is needlessly complex and totally impenetrable to parents and taxpayers.

The failure in that approach is obvious. Last year alone, Ontarians spent more than \$13 billion on elementary and secondary education. That's more per pupil than any other jurisdiction in Canada, yet our students' performance on national and international tests continues to lag behind those of other jurisdictions.

It's of little surprise that parents are telling us they're concerned about whether their children are learning. Teachers are spending large amounts of time at the beginning of each new school year making sure the students entering their classes are equipped to succeed, and taxpayers aren't convinced they're getting the best possible return on their investment in education.

We don't believe that the current system's problems can be blamed on the province's students or the parents or teachers. It's a systematic problem. The system is broken, and we are committed to fixing it.

This government's comprehensive education reform is built on three key pillars: curriculum and standards improvements, funding changes and governance reform. The Fewer School Boards Act specifically addresses the latter two. I want to stress, however, that our effectiveness in revitalizing the system will be a barometer of how successful we are in enhancing classroom learning and student achievement.

This government will no longer require residential property taxpayers to bear the burden of funding education. School boards have increased residential property taxes by an average of 5% a year, every year over the last 10 years. If these trends continued, residential property taxpayers would be paying \$6.2 billion for education by the year 2000. We do not believe that residential property taxpayers, many of whom are on fixed incomes, should be singled out to pay the sometimes questionable expenses of school boards. The days when hardworking seniors who have worked hard all their lives and lived by the rules lose their homes due to unnecessary school board spending will be gone.

Effective in 1998 these funds will be provided through provincial grants, not residential property taxes. Business will continue to support effective and accountable funding of the education system. These taxes will remain in the community in which they were raised. Beginning in 1998, municipalities will collect this money and forward it to the local school boards.

The Ministry of Education will distribute education funding to school boards through a new, fair funding model that we are developing. It will be a model that funds students, not school boards. It will ensure a high quality of education that meets all students' individual needs regardless of where they live.

The model is based on work conducted by the Working Group on Education Finance Reform. The group was composed of representatives of teachers' federations, provincial school board associations and Metro area school boards. It will recognize the cost of educating students, including special circumstances such as students learning English for the first time in the classroom, students with special needs and students in remote communities.

In doing so the model will respond to the concerns of large urban boards, which are the largest recipients of new immigrants not only to Ontario but to Canada, and of smaller boards which must meet the high costs of transportation and heating. The Minister of Education will be releasing a full and detailed proposal for the new funding model later this winter. Through the Fewer School Boards Act we are streamlining the structure of the system and focusing resources on the classroom, where they belong.

According to the report on school board spending, 1995-96, some boards in Ontario devote up to 73% to the classroom, others as little as 51%, a 22% difference that adds up to millions and millions of dollars. The report found that on average, for every dollar spent in the classroom, more than 80 cents was spent outside the classroom. This discrepancy cannot continue if we're going to give every student in this province an opportunity to excel and reach their full potential.

**The Acting Speaker:** It being 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*



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Wednesday 29 January 1997

Mercredi 29 janvier 1997



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 29 January 1997

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 29 janvier 1997

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### HOSPITAL FINANCING

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** My statement is directed to the Minister of Health and it relates to the funding of northern and remote hospitals. Minister, hospital CEOs in my riding believe that the small hospital funding subcommittee has not considered the unique and traditional role of remote hospitals. As the minister is aware, small hospitals are in many cases the primary provider of health care services in our communities. They operate ambulance services, community mental health programs, Meals on Wheels, alcohol addiction services, and the list goes on.

Hospital trustees would like to remind the minister that he has not taken into consideration the operating budgets of these community-based programs when calculating hospital administrative overhead percentages. They also are concerned that the minister has not provided them with his commitment to consider the range of services they provide to our communities before any budget cuts are announced. Northern and remote hospitals also want assurances they will be given the financial support required to enable them to continue to provide the health care services northern residents expect and deserve.

Minister, it is clear to all concerned that you and your government are not providing the necessary consideration to the uniquenesses of the north. I assure you that northwestern residents will not sit by while you reduce their health care services to pay for the tax cut for your Bay Street friends.

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** Today the dictatorial hand of Mike Harris appears again, because later this afternoon we expect to be debating a closure motion on Bill 103, a motion that in its intent is going to shut down the process of debate on this bill here in this Legislature — yes, finally allow for some hearings; yes, finally allow for those hearings to carry on beyond the referendum in Metropolitan Toronto; but also clearly set up in a way that will ensure the government really is not serious about listening to anything that will be said to it during this process.

If they were, they wouldn't have limited it, as they do in this motion, to one day only of third reading debate following the hearings. They would have allowed for ample time to deal with all of the good people who want

to speak to this motion and they wouldn't have dilly-dallied on this as they have and come to this point of having to resort to a closure motion to deal with this.

We have been saying all along that it was important for us to get the bill out to committee, to allow people to be heard, but we've also been saying that it's important for this government to listen to the people of Metropolitan Toronto, who are going to get the chance at least in a referendum through the process of early March to be able to express their opinions.

We expect this government to listen and we will do everything we can to make sure it listens to the will of the people of Metropolitan Toronto on this very important issue.

### EVINRUDE CENTRE

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** I would like to take this opportunity to inform all members of the House of the new, spectacular community centre opening in the city of Peterborough on February 1.

The Evinrude Centre is a state-of-the-art, twin-pad hockey arena that will serve the community well. For many years the demands on other recreational facilities to host various hockey and other venues have exceeded the supply of existing facilities. The provincial government made contributions towards this project under the Canada-Ontario infrastructure works program.

On February 1, the people of Peterborough will be welcoming my colleague the Honourable Marilyn Mushinski, Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, who has agreed to participate in the opening of this facility. Her presence at the opening will underscore this government's commitment to supporting local projects and initiatives that bring communities closer together.

Let me take this opportunity to thank all of the volunteers, with a personal thanks to Ken Armstrong and his fund-raising group, as well as all levels of government for contributing their time, resources and energy towards making the Evinrude Centre another tremendous addition to the community of Peterborough.

### GOVERNMENT MAIL SERVICE

**Mr Gilles E. Morin (Carleton East):** Today readers of the Toronto press learned that the government is considering privatizing the Legislature's internal mail system, a move that would put into question the future of its 122 employees. Sixteen of those employees are people with disabilities, who do an outstanding job in their own right. Their experience also proves the contribution others in their situation can make when given the opportunity to do so. In the last number of years this Legislature has made some progress in making sure that disadvantaged



groups have achieved greater equity and representation in our labour force.

But I would like to caution against a return to past practices. We have seen that this government is firmly opposed to giving special consideration to those who have historically faced discrimination, and the recommendations of the Red Tape Commission reiterate its desire not to impose those considerations on the private sector.

Regardless of the final decision in this case, I ask the government to make a firm commitment to protecting the hard-won rights of its disabled employees who remain in the public sector and those who will be affected by a shift to the private sector.

### NATIVE ISSUES

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** Three weeks ago, on January 8 and 9, I took a trip along the coast to visit the constituents of Attawapiskat, Moosonee and Moose Factory. What I witnessed there was a lack of commitment from this government to help remote communities.

In Attawapiskat, for example, there is an urgent need for 200 homes. It is clearly unacceptable in the 1990s that some 20 people have to live under the same roof because of a lack of houses. The community has no recreation facilities at all to offer its youth, who represent two thirds of the population. Services like an arena would help keep the teenagers and young adults off the streets. With your help, they could start building an arena this summer.

It's a shame that Fort Albany and Kashechewan residents were left with no power for almost 48 hours last week, with the temperatures plunging to as low as minus 36 degrees Celsius overnight, and this is the second time this year. The installation of a power grid from Moosonee to Fort Albany, Kashechewan and Attawapiskat would solve the problem caused by obsolete generators and mechanical breakdown.

The previous NDP government showed leadership in dealing with native issues and, as far as we have seen, nothing good has come in the last 20 months from this government. While I recognize that the federal government plays a role in native issues, I want to stress that this government has been elected to represent each and every citizen of this province and to cooperate with the federal government to ensure the wellbeing of all the native communities within my riding.

### INDIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** I had the great pleasure Sunday evening of attending the kickoff dinner of the 50th anniversary celebrations of India's independence, hosted by the Indo-Canadian Advisory Group, with my colleague the member for Scarborough East.

The countdown for the 50th anniversary of India's independence has begun and so too have the festivities to celebrate this historic event. The focal point of the Garland of Events will be the weekend of August 15, 1997, the 50th anniversary of the day India attained independence.

India's struggle for independence, though painful and prolonged, was remarkably peaceful because of the

leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and his philosophy of non-violence.

India was among the first nations to extract herself from the control of a colonial power and guide her own destiny according to the needs and wishes of her own people. India served as a model for other nations to follow in asserting their rights for self-governance.

Over the last 50 years, India has made remarkable progress internally and in the international arena. With recent economic restructuring and liberalization, India has become the fifth-largest economy in the world and second among developing countries.

I am fortunate to have a number of Indo-Canadian residents in my riding of Scarborough Centre, and on behalf of all constituents I want to congratulate them on this important milestone and wish them all the best for their Garland of Events. As well, I would ask every member of this House to join me in extending congratulations and best wishes and urge every member of the House to become involved in the celebrations.

1340

### EDUCATION REFORM

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** Last night in High Park-Swansea we had an excellent example of the government's new method of parental involvement in their children's education. It was quite a spectacle to see the parents from the PTA of Annette Street Public School barred from getting into a meeting on education being held in their own school.

It was incredible that these parents were denied access to any meeting on education concerning their children. It was even more incredible that this meeting was not only with the MPP for the area but also with the Minister of Education and Training.

The meeting was to discuss the government's so-called reforms to education, but the parents of the school were deliberately left off the guest list and only a chosen few were there. Those were the people who agree with the government's agenda of catastrophic reforms to education. Clearly the member and the minister did not want to hear the views of constituents and parents who just might disagree with this government's agenda in education.

What is more amazing and even more frightful is that the Minister of Education closed the door on these parents. This is the same minister who claims to want to have more parental involvement. It is clear that this Minister of Education doesn't care about parent councils; that this Minister of Education doesn't care about parental ideas; that this Minister of Education doesn't care about parental concerns; that this Minister of Education doesn't care.

### PROPANE PRICES

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I've had a number of complaints over the last number of weeks from constituents in Algoma who are dependent upon propane for their heating. Propane in our area has gone up from approximately 43 cents a litre three months ago, three times over the last three months, to approximately 50 cents a litre today. Many senior citizens in rural parts of Algoma are



dependent upon propane and have a difficult time meeting the increasing costs of this fuel.

I understand that the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations and the Ministry of Environment and Energy do not have any legislation regulating the market price of propane. There is no regulation as there is with the price of natural gas or heating oil or electricity.

I'm told that last fall in the Midwest US there was a massive increase in propane supplies required to dry crops. As a result of that, there was an inventory shortage to refineries, and that resulted in a significant increase in the price. Also there was some speculation about the possible flow of crude oil from Iraq that affected the price.

It's obvious that if senior citizens are to be protected from gouging, there should be some regulation in Ontario.

### SPECIAL OLYMPICS

**Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West):** The largest international multisport event in 1997 takes place in Ontario next week: the world Special Olympics Winter Games. Two thousand athletes from 80 countries are attending. They're accompanied by 700 coaches, 6,000 volunteers and thousands of supporters and family members.

The Special Olympics provides children and adults with mental disabilities the opportunity to participate in sports training and athletic competition. Canada has a unique history with the Special Olympics. We were one of only two countries that participated in the first Special Olympics held in Chicago in 1968.

Today Special Olympics chapters exist in thousands of Canadian communities. Over the past 30 years the Special Olympics has grown into a world-class sports competition. The athletes are coming to Ontario for friendly competition after years of training, countless practices and gruelling drills. They worked hard to get here. Their families, coaches and volunteers have followed them down this arduous road of preparation.

The Special Olympics is a celebration of outstanding athletes and the true spirit of amateur sport. It is a unique sporting event that enriches the lives of everyone who is involved. The oath of the Special Olympics best describes the spirit they encompass: "Let me win. But, if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

I encourage all Ontarians to show support for these very special, dedicated athletes from all over the world.

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

#### GOVERNMENT AGENCIES REVIEW

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** I'm pleased to announce to the members of the House that the government is continuing to cut waste and duplication, improve service and save taxpayers' dollars in provincial agencies, boards and com-

missions. By taking action on task force recommendations on 62 operational agencies, the government is moving towards its target to save \$220 million in taxpayers' dollars.

The government is moving to wind down the Ontario Junior Farmer Establishment Loan Corp, which has not made a loan for almost 30 years, and has eliminated the Ontario Asset Financing Corp, inactive since it was created by the previous government in 1995.

These actions are among those recommended by the task force on agencies, boards and commissions, chaired by Bob Wood, the member for London South.

The task force report on 62 operational agencies sends a clear direction for the government. Ministries will carry out detailed analysis and planning to determine the best way to implement the task force's recommendations.

As you may recall, in May 1996 I reported to the members of the House on the results of the first phase of the task force review, dealing with advisory agencies. As a result of that review, the government is taking steps to streamline and eliminate advisory agencies.

This is the first time in decades that operational agencies in the province have been reviewed comprehensively.

Based on the task force recommendations, the government will:

Eliminate 12 operational agencies over the next two years;

Redesign the way 30 agencies, such as the Ontario Science Centre and the St Lawrence Parks Commission, deliver their services. Three of these agencies are immediately recommended as candidates for privatization, and those are the Metropolitan Toronto Convention Centre, Ontario Place Corp and Ortech Corp.

The government will also review 14 agencies to improve efficiency and effectiveness. These agencies include the Royal Ontario Museum and the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Decisions on six agencies, including the Ontario Mental Health Foundation and the Alcoholism and Drug Addiction Research Foundation, are being deferred until completion of reviews that were already under way.

It may simply make better sense to further involve the private sector or other government levels in the way that the agency carries out its work.

Overall, the government is eliminating 20% of its 62 operational agencies and revamping 60% of the remainder. Many of these agencies have continued to exist for years at taxpayers' expense despite the fact that their work is complete, or their mandate is obsolete or they no longer provide value to the public.

The government is already acting on the task force's earlier recommendations to streamline or eliminate 37 of the 50 advisory agencies over the next two years. This, along with action to be taken on the operational agencies, will help us move towards a smaller and yet more efficient organization which spends taxpayers' dollars wisely.

The government has already identified more than \$60 million in savings from operational agencies. We anticipate further savings once the detailed studies recommended by this task force are done and decisions made.



The government's decision to act on the task force report takes us closer to reducing spending on agencies, boards and commissions by \$220 million.

I would like to commend Mr Wood and his task force for their thoroughness and hard work. Their review on operational agencies will result in less duplication, more efficiency and new and more flexible ways to deliver service.

With these decisions, the government is well on its way to fulfilling its throne speech commitment to put all agencies to the test of continued relevance and value to taxpayers for their money.

Finally, I will report back with further decisions concerning the third and final phase of the task force's review, focusing on regulatory and adjudicative agencies, which will be released shortly.

1350

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I would like to respond to the minister's release today of the government task force on agencies, boards and commissions, the report on their operational agencies. I can only surmise that the government must be feeling an awful lot of pressure on their megacity announcements and that is why they've thrown this red herring out, to try to deflect some of the concerns that are being expressed.

I haven't had a chance to read through the whole document because it was just delivered to me a few minutes ago, but after looking at it briefly, I find that there are some very strange things that this group has done because in many cases they've done nothing. What is happening is that they are setting out a smokescreen to get people talking and being concerned about what may or may not happen to them. They've announced several different agencies that should be eliminated.

Let me give you an example. They want to eliminate Innovation Ontario Corp. This indicates to me that this government has no idea what Innovation Ontario does and the role that it plays. When they talk about it they suggest that it shouldn't be in this business because there are private funds available, and that just isn't true; that's the reason they are in the business. There are lots of innovative ideas in Ontario that are not being able to get financed because of their risk value, but that's the role the government should play. I have no problem whatsoever with the government getting out of things that can be done in the private sector and that shouldn't be done by government. But there are other things that the government should be doing, and they should be doing them because this is what gives us some competitive advantage, and Innovation Ontario is certainly one of those particular agencies.

I'm very concerned about a couple of other things that have happened. The Ontario Lottery Corp: I'm sure the minister will know that people in Sault Ste Marie are very concerned about what could possibly happen if the Ontario Lottery Corp was privatized. That's exactly the same thing as privatizing the casinos, but when you read the rationale — and I just want to quote from the report. It says:

"The task force recommends the government review all aspects of the corporation's operations to find the most appropriate and cost-effective method of delivering the

corporation's activities while staying within the province's legal obligations under the Criminal Code of Canada."

I would suggest that is a given, that is an absolute given, no matter what government is in power and what decision is being made. To single this out and say, "This is something that we're going to have delivered differently," sets up a concern that I think is unwarranted and that is going to create some problems for people who may automatically think that, because it is being tabled in this report, their jobs may be in jeopardy.

The same thing goes for Ontario Place. Ontario Place is not just a commercial enterprise. It was conceived by a previous Conservative government to serve a very special purpose for the people of Ontario. That may require some subsidization by the government. To decide that it should be turned over to the private sector and that the subsidy will be removed indicates that you're literally going to throw it to the wolves and if it survives, fine, and if it doesn't, that's the way the world turns and that's the way businesses operate. I think we have an obligation to make sure that places like Ontario Place, which is a tremendous asset for the city and for this province, are kept viable, and if that means some government support, so be it.

The last thing I want to talk about is the elimination of the Ontario Transportation Capital Corp. This is really ironic in that when Highway 407 was conceived and was put out to public tender the government of the day awarded it to a consortium that was very controversial at the time because of perceived undue influence. The whole premise behind that funding was that they would provide private financing. After they got the contract they came back to the government and the government agreed that they would, in fact, guarantee the funding. Now the minister is saying, "We're going to take a look and see how we can do that a different way."

You're going full circle, and I think that is setting up some problems. I would suggest that when the other shoe drops and you get into some other announcements, you don't fall into the same trap, and that you give this away to the private sector but do not give away the freedom from the obligations and that you don't get stuck with it.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** We know what's really at the basis of this report and this announcement today. We know that when the government talks about saving some \$220 million in taxpayers' money they're going to save that by reducing services. You will recall one very clear example. It wasn't that long ago that this government said, when they cut the employment equity program, that they were going to divert some of that money into the Human Rights Commission. People are still waiting to see some of that money. We know we're never going to see it.

Today we see more clearly, as the government House leader indicated, what the direction of this government is. It clearly is towards privatizing. It's clearly towards privatizing a variety of services that have been, for very good reason, in the public realm for many years. Let's just talk about a couple of those.

The Ontario Lottery Corp — which, by the way, isn't even mentioned. We have here a list of 12 operational



agencies over the next two years that are going to be eliminated, and yet the minister in his statement doesn't even give us the courtesy of listing what those agencies are nor giving us a copy of the report so that we can see for ourselves what these agencies are.

In the privatization efforts, my colleague the member for Sault Ste Marie has already raised in this House the kind of devastation that would occur in his community of Sault Ste Marie if the Ontario Lottery Corp disappears as a basic service in that area, and the impact will be felt throughout the province.

Another examples that we see here: the Ontario Place Corp. How fitting a symbol for this reform government that this institution, begun by another Conservative government, a real Conservative government, is now being disbanded by the Mike Harris government, being sold off to its friends.

Other examples are the Ortech Corp and the Metropolitan Toronto Convention Centre, where government and public funds have been going into building a world-class facility, and now this government is prepared to just hand it over to its friends. We know really that what's at the basis of this is exactly that. It's not enough that this government is doing everything in its power to ensure that its wealthy friends get richer as a result of the tax cut; it now wants to make sure it adds to that by giving them a few more gifts by selling off good corporations that have been providing good public service.

What I want to say to the government and to Mike Harris is that if they were really serious about actually cutting down waste and duplication, they could start by not implementing the two commissions that they're about to put on to the public of Ontario: the one that creates a trusteeship in Metropolitan Toronto and the second one, which creates a trusteeship on school boards across the province. You want to save money? You want to restore democracy to this province? Deal with those two commissions, disband those commissions that you've begun. Don't play around with these ones. Don't hand off these corporations to your rich friends, because people know what your agenda is all about.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** One thing the government isn't bragging about today is that it's also streamlining and eliminating women from agencies, boards and commissions. It seems that the Attorney General and the other government colleagues can't find experienced women to appoint to agencies, boards and commissions. Let's look at the facts here. Let's get it on the table today what's happening.

Last year the Ontario Municipal Board was chaired by Miss Helen Cooper. Now it's chaired by Mr Doug Colbourne. Last year the Ontario Human Rights Commission was chaired by Ms Rosemary Brown. Today it's chaired by Mr Keith Norton. And on and on. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

In the last year there's been a turnover of about 11 positions in the Circle of Chairs. This is a group of about 50 board chairs who meet monthly. In 1995, those 11 positions were held by three men and eight women. Now in 1997, these positions are held by nine men and two women.

The Attorney General has made a total of eight judicial appointments. Of these eight, one was a woman and one was an aboriginal man. What I find particularly offensive about how the Attorney General responded to this is he had the nerve to state that his decisions are based on merit. What the AG is implying is that he can't find qualified women to appoint as judges. This is the age-old excuse for not appointing women.

I find it offensive that the minister responsible for women's issues once again is not standing up in this House and condemning this. Where is she? Where is she at the table in defending the rights of women? Once again not there. Where are the rest of the women on cabinet? As this government is busy downsizing, streamlining, cutting these ABCs, they are not even taking a look at what is happening after years of our government and the governments before that trying to do everything they can to get more women involved and in top positions on these boards and commissions. They are being eliminated too. For shame.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Can I get some order just for a moment? Point of privilege, member for Fort York.

1400

## ACCESS TO LEGISLATIVE BUILDING

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: This morning I attended a very peaceful gathering of very mild-mannered but passionate people wanting very much to talk to either the Premier or the minister in charge of amalgamating the cities in Toronto. They were gathered here in the east wing on the second floor.

My privileges as a member have been hampered in my inability to meet and to escort some of these citizens around in order to give them that access they are entitled to. The Premier and ministers have a privilege and a right to refuse to meet with them, or to decide that perhaps they should chat and discuss whatever issue they came to talk to them about. Instead of that, what we had was the use of the police to cordon off the group in such a way as to prevent easy and free access to the building.

The police normally are used in a way to apprehend, to deal with matters of violence and to maintain peace and order, and I appreciate that, but to use the police in this manner so as to prevent easy flow and peaceful movement of ordinary citizens in my view is inappropriate. We should not be using the police in this way, and I argue that having them used in this way is a violation of the democratic rights of the citizens of Ontario.

What I would like from you, Speaker, is that you review this matter. I need to know who issued that order and on what basis the police were told to cordon off these people, to restrict their access, on what basis that action was necessitated, because in my presence there I did not see the need for the police to cordon off people in such a way as to prevent that free flow of movement of those citizens.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: Another point of privilege, and



perhaps fleshing it out a little bit, because I think it would be important for the Speaker to consider this other, related matter at the same time. I was there with this group this morning. They were Ontarians who wanted to travel about the floors of Queen's Park. The Speaker will know, as with most other members, I frequently host any number of groups of younger people and older people here. This group, who were acting peaceably, who were not causing any breach of the peace and there was nothing to indicate that they posed a threat to the peace, were, as indicated by the member for Fort York, basically held at bay by a cordon of police officers.

I ask the Speaker also to consider what I understand, in my view, to be another problem very much related. Over the recent past I've had more and more visitors to this building being told that they're not welcome, that they're not permitted in fact in the area on the second floor where scrums take place after question period.

I understand the need for you, Speaker, and for the legislative security services and the OPP to maintain order here and to prevent any disruptions. However, I put this to you: that with my guests I consider attendance at the scrums a very important part of their visit to Queen's Park in terms of understanding all of the process that takes place here. I'm asking you, in the consideration of the point of privilege of the member for Fort York, to also consider, please, that my privileges, as they rest with my constituents and other visitors here, are also being infringed and violated by virtue of what appears to be a new array of somewhat arbitrary and secret rules. Nobody's telling us what the rules are and there isn't an opportunity to debate them, to discuss them, to rebut any rationale that might be posed for them. What we witnessed this morning was tragic because a very public place, perhaps what should be the most public place in this province, had been turned into a very private, exclusive place where members of the public who pay for this place were being denied an opportunity to walk about it peaceably.

I've witnessed that in terms of other visitors I've had in the area of the scrums. I consider that as repugnant, a violation of my privilege as a member. I would ask the Speaker to consider that in conjunction with the matter raised by the member for Fort York.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, on a point of privilege: Since during the member's introduction of the point of privilege he brought up the Premier's name and the minister who is responsible, just to state the obvious, the security of this building has nothing to do with this government. I think members know, and I assume the people of Ontario know, that the security of this building does not come under the control of the government. If indeed the police were called — I don't know who was called — it has nothing to do with the government.

Mr Speaker, as you know, it would be your responsibility and that of the Board of Internal Economy to look after those security measures.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Let me just deal with this quickly, without taking too much time.

I have a very real interest in promoting this facility, this building, as a place for people to come, and outside this facility to demonstrate and express points of view and interests different than those of the government or opposition. But let me be very clear to the members for Welland-Thorold and Fort York.

When you come into this building, the rules change to some degree, and the rules change in this way: Members have free and open access to travel the halls of this building. It would be a very dangerous and difficult precedent to set to suggest that demonstrations may in fact take place outside offices of members or outside the Premier's office or outside cabinet offices. It seems to me, from the report I received today, that although you may have seen this as a peaceable group, others would suggest that peaceable as they were, it was a demonstration none the less.

I frankly think, when you're bringing that many people together and they're requesting to speak to individual cabinet ministers, who in my opinion should have full and unfettered access to cabinet meetings — because they are not public meetings; they are important executive meetings that take place in this facility — it seems to me that maybe the privileges not necessarily of the members for Fort York and Welland-Thorold are being usurped but quite possibly the privileges of those in cabinet.

So I say to the members for Welland-Thorold and Fort York we must be very careful. We know this is the democratic place it's supposed to be. I understand what this facility means and what it means to the people of Ontario, but let me be very clear. I think the members of this place have every right and expectation to walk the halls without being presented with demonstrations in opposition or in favour of particular government initiatives. If I started down that slippery slope and allowed individuals or groups to come into this place and begin to demonstrate, I think it would become very unruly in a very short period of time.

To those two members, if demonstrations want to take place out front I will cooperate completely. When you come into this place the rules change and they're different, and I say to both the members, although you brought this forward, I don't agree with you. I don't think the people of Ontario in the truest democratic sense could agree with you and I think it's important that we allow all of us free and open access and movement within this building. If that isn't in place, there's an inherent danger there for all of us.

I don't accept your point of privilege. I don't accept it as a point of order. I say to you that those people were probably in the wrong as opposed to the cabinet ministers being in the wrong.

1410

#### SPEAKER'S RULINGS

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I have two rulings I'd like to make with respect to some previous points of privilege and order.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Welland-Thorold, I ask you to come to order.



Monday, January 27, 1997, the member for Essex South (Mr Crozier) raised a point of privilege respecting the fact that the standing committee on government agencies had received a certificate of intended appointments to a body which has not yet been established.

I've also received submissions from the government House leader.

Let me begin by saying that I don't find the action of the government in sending notice to the appropriate committee of its intent to make an appointment in any way an issue of privilege or contempt.

I went on, however, to consider whether or not the point raised by the member might more properly be a point of order. In reviewing the matter, I find nothing in the referral of a certificate of intent to appoint these two candidates which would in any way limit or compromise the ability or rights of a committee to conduct a review under the terms of the standing orders.

The fact that the appointments are contingent on the passage of legislation does not impact on the committee's review. I want to note here that this is not the first time the committee has reviewed an intended appointee prior to passage of legislation which establishes the agency, board or commission.

In 1991 the committee reviewed and concurred in the intended appointment of the Employment Equity Commissioner. Some members who were here during that period of time may recall that the legislation that provided for the Employment Equity Commissioner was not passed in this Legislature until 1994, but the appointment took place in 1991.

The committee has the ability to conduct its review of this intended appointee in the same manner it employs in all other cases. Therefore, I find that the member for Essex South has neither a point of privilege nor in fact a point of order.

Yesterday, the member for Oakwood (Mr Colle) rose on a question of privilege to express some concerns about a fax dealing with the government's agenda for municipal reform. According to the member, the fax indicated among other things that the "new united Toronto will be in place by January 1998."

Other members rose on separate but related questions of privilege. It seems that other members had also come into possession of faxes communicating information about the government's agenda for municipal reform. In this regard, submissions were made by the member for Algoma (Mr Wildman), the member for St Catharines (Mr Bradley), the member for Rainy River (Mr Hampton), the Minister of Environment and Energy (Mr Sterling) and the member for Beaches-Woodbine (Ms Lankin). I also heard from the government House leader on these matters.

I have had an opportunity to review the faxes in question and the submissions of the members who spoke to these matters.

Let me begin by responding to the submissions respecting the alleged breach of federal guidelines concerning the sending of faxes. This involves a legal — perhaps even a constitutional — issue, something that is obviously not within the Speaker's jurisdiction.

I will not leave the matter at just that. Rest assured that I continue to be perturbed about the information that is being communicated in these faxes. I am prepared to give people a reasonable amount of time to react to the events of last week and to rectify any unsatisfactory state of affairs, but I want to emphasize the word "reasonable."

I would ask whoever is responsible for sending out this kind of information — or who is thinking about communicating this kind of information — to read and absorb my ruling of January 22, 1997. It can be found on page 6441 of Hansard. Read it and then read it again, if necessary, because my patience is wearing thin — very thin. In fact, it would be helpful if you just read it.

So that all members know where I stand, I want to make it plain to all that a prima facie case of contempt can be established even though it is not known who is communicating the objectionable information. What is important is not who is communicating objectionable information, but rather the fact that such information is being communicated.

I'd like to thank the various members who spoke to the matters they raised in this House yesterday.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The minister will know that this morning our Liberal caucus met with some of the most respected people in Metro to get their view of the impact of your moves on dumping on municipalities a whole bunch of new services.

We heard, first, that they believe it's a big mistake in terms of just simply public policy, but we also heard consistently that in their opinion you're going to dramatically increase property taxes for all the residences in Metropolitan Toronto. Each of them has gone over the numbers. In North York it is their judgement that taxes will go up on residential properties by 11%. Mayor Frances Nunziata of York says that her community would be hit with almost a 10% increase in property tax for residences. Metro Chair Alan Tonks indicated that property taxes will go up significantly and put them on the verge of bankruptcy.

Minister, who should we believe? The mayors, who have done their homework and have released their figures showing significant property tax increases, or you, who refuse to release any studies on it?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I will refer the question from the member to the Minister of Finance.

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** First of all, I don't know how anybody can accurately predict how much their taxes would or would not go up until they know what their 1996 assessed values are going to be; until they determine the ratios and the range differential between commercial and residential and industrial and residential properties; until they decide what their mill rates are going to be for a particular year; until they decide which one of the six classes they're now



allowed to distribute property taxes among. Until all those decisions are made and until the final cost figures are in for the year just ended, 1996, I don't know how anybody could accurately predict what you're predicting.

**Mr Phillips:** I think Ontarians must be shaking their heads at this government. You are asking us to approve, tomorrow, the first bill in your mega-bills. You are going to force us, through closure, to approve in principle your bills and you refuse to tell the people of Metropolitan Toronto what it's going to cost.

I would just say we have people in Metropolitan Toronto who are taking whatever they can from you on your numbers. They've crunched them. They've shown that you are adding \$1.2 billion across Ontario to property tax. I challenge you to discredit that. The officials across the province have done those numbers and you are adding that to it.

I'll ask a very simple question. You want us to approve a proposal that in the eyes of the major players in Metro Toronto adds 10% to property tax. Will you today table the studies that show it will not add 10% to property tax in Metropolitan Toronto?

**Hon Mr Eves:** First of all, we are not asking anybody to pass, in finality, any bill tomorrow. Let's get that out of the way. What we're asking for, and you know full well what the government House leader is asking for, is second reading on a bill that will be sent for public hearings for five consecutive weeks. That's what we're asking for. Maybe you over there don't want public consultation, but we in the government would like to hear what the public has to say. We'd like to hear what municipalities have to say.

**Mr Phillips:** Again, for the public — I hope they are listening to this — we are being forced to approve in principle these major bills that will change Ontario forever and you refuse to provide us with the evidence that the cabinet had when they made those decisions.

I will say to you very clearly, the mayors, the key people in Metropolitan Toronto have done their number work. Property taxes, they believe, will go up 10%. Will you table today the studies on which you made the decisions to offload, to dump \$1 billion of extra costs on the property taxpayers? Will you table those studies so that as we debate these bills, we can have the same information you had when the cabinet made its decision?

**Hon Mr Eves:** We are not offloading or dumping \$1 billion on anybody.

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** Yes, you are.

**Hon Mr Eves:** We are not. In today's dollars —

**Mr Phillips:** Where are the numbers wrong? Show us the numbers.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Minister.

1420

**Hon Mr Eves:** In today's dollars we're asking municipalities province-wide to assume \$6.355 billion worth of responsibility in return for, on an annual basis, probably more but no less than \$6.4 billion, and that is factually correct.

I ask the honourable member, with respect to Metropolitan Toronto, has he included in his numbers the following figures: \$40-plus million that Metro taxpayers saved last year because of reduced cost of social assist-

ance? And those welfare caseloads will continue to drop and that saving will continue to rise. Have you included that number?

Have you included in your number the \$100 million that Metro Toronto loses each and every year because of an antiquated, outdated property assessment system that has 1940 values as opposed to 1995 in Niagara region — \$100 million every year? Have you included in your figures, I say to the honourable member, \$65 million every year that Metro's education costs would have gone up again and have gone up for the last decade? Have you included that number in your numbers, and have you included —

**The Speaker:** Minister of Finance, thank you. Is that it? New question, member for Lawrence.

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** This is new Tory math: Pay more and you get less.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** This morning the mayor of Toronto told us how numerous American mayors have told her they see in Toronto both their past and their future. They see their past because —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I need to know who your question is to.

**Mr Cordiano:** The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**Mr Cordiano:** They see their past because their cities used to be safe, healthy and clean. They see their future because they are trying to duplicate the kind of city we enjoy in Toronto today.

Minister, there was a unanimous view among the presenters this morning that you are destroying Metro Toronto with your plan, that your decision to duplicate American-type cities is the wrong way to go. Why would you jeopardize the safe, healthy and clean communities we have? Why are you taking us down the American road and trying to duplicate cities like Detroit and Washington? Why are you doing that to Metro?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I agree with the member that we have a great city and a great community in Metropolitan Toronto. What we are going to do is create something that is even better by getting rid of the waste and duplication and overlap and high costs that our citizens are required to bear because of inadequate levels of government.

We have more politicians and more governments looking after the people in this community than probably any other community in Canada. I can assure you that when the city is amalgamated and we get rid of six of this and seven of that and eight of something else, the citizens in this community will be far better off.

**Mr Cordiano:** Every presenter this morning agreed that your plan to dump social services and help for the disabled and seniors on to municipalities is nothing short of reckless. That's what they described it as. We heard from groups like the Ontario Coalition of Senior Citizens' Organizations, who said that your dumping will leave seniors and the disabled with higher property taxes, that you're going to chase them out of their homes. They said, and I quote, "The Harris government is only looking at the short monetary gain on the province's books, not the



long-term effects on social services and community programs." They said this would be disastrous for Metro Toronto and for seniors.

Minister, given the promises you made during the last election campaign, how can you assure seniors and the disabled that they will not become the targets of your cuts when your mega-dumping is complete? Protect seniors, protect the disabled: That's what you said you would do in the last election campaign. Why are you going back on your election promises?

**Hon Mr Leach:** To the member opposite, if he has an opportunity to read the proposals we're putting forward on property tax reform, he would recognize that we're giving the municipalities the ability to deal specifically with the disabled and specifically with seniors. An option that we're making available to municipalities is to defer any possible shift in taxes, because these are not increases in taxes. This is a system to bring equity into the system. If there is a citizen, a senior or a disabled person, the municipality will have the right to spread that increase out over eight years, or at the choice of the senior or the disabled they can defer any shift in taxes until such time as the property changes hands.

**Mr Cordiano:** This is about the character of our communities, the kind of Ontario we want, the kind of Ontario I want my children to grow up and everyone wants their children to grow up in — safe, clean communities. What you're doing will make that impossible in the future. You're going to destroy municipality after municipality right across this province. People told us that this morning. They're saying that. The chorus is growing; it's louder each and every day.

Minister, you and your plan are about to destroy municipalities. You are just eradicating the quality of life we have in this province with all the measures you're taking. Will you back away from this reckless strategy, from this ill-conceived plan to dump all these additional costs on to municipalities? It's on your head and I'm asking you to back away from it. It's ill-conceived, it's wrongheaded and it's reckless. Have the courage to stand up and defend cities across this province.

**Hon Mr Leach:** As a matter of fact, I am so convinced that the proposals we're bringing in will be of such great benefit to the citizens of this province that I wish we could implement them faster than we are.

The proposals we're bringing in by taking \$5.4 billion off the property tax by assuming the cost of education and giving responsibility for the delivery of hard services to the municipalities will bring about a far more efficient, cost-efficient, better type of municipality to live in, and we know the citizens of Ontario understand this, we know they're backing our moves. They're in favour of what we're doing and if we had an opportunity to implement it even faster, we would.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The minister wants to move even faster, he says. Maybe your next bill could be to just transfer all the powers of the Legislature to you and then you don't have to bother with us in this House.

Minister, I want to talk to you about what you're doing with this closure motion today. You're bringing down

closure on debate, but more importantly, you're bringing down closure on the public of Metropolitan Toronto. You're bringing down closure on democracy.

Your Deputy Premier says you want to hear what the public has to say, but it's clear to us that you're not interested in what the public has to say, because your closure motion allows only one day of debate after the hearings are finished on third reading of this bill. It's clear to us that you don't intend to listen at all to what people have to say, unless you change your mind even at this late point.

1430

That's what I want to ask you. Will you come to your senses? Will you drop your draconian closure motion and will you agree to drop your legislation if that's what you hear, particularly from the people of Metropolitan Toronto, particularly as they vote against your megacity in the referendum? Will you do that?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I don't think I've ever heard a more hypocritical statement than that.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Minister, that word is unparliamentary and I ask you to withdraw.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I withdraw, Mr Speaker. It should never be necessary to state the obvious.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** The member for Kingston and The Islands, order. You know I'm probably going to say something because I've stood back up, so if you could just give me a moment, I will deal with it.

That's not a withdrawal. If you could stop at, "I withdraw it," that would make it a withdrawal.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I withdraw it, Mr Speaker.

The opposition, both parties, have done nothing but try to derail this bill by delaying it, by keeping it away from public hearings.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Minister.

**Hon Mr Leach:** The opposition say they want debate, but what have they done over the last several weeks but cause delay, ring bells? At least four hours of debating time were lost. They talk about wanting to have a democratic process and what do they do? They keep this bill from going out to the public so the public can have input and hearings to debate the issue, to provide their comments. They have done absolutely nothing to assist the public in that process.

**Mr Silipo:** Being an optimist, I would like to say that I think there's still some hope. If this minister is finally beginning to understand that we are trying to derail his megacity bill, then he's finally beginning to get it. That's exactly what we've been trying to do because we think this bill is wrong. But we're not interested in hearing ourselves; we want to make sure you listen to the people of the province. You can talk about the process, but you know that we have wanted and we want to see the hearings. What we are saying is that we want to make sure you listen to what people have to say and you do something about it, as opposed to just going through the charade of listening and then carrying on as if nothing was said to you.



It's not just us, Minister; it's your own friends, from the board of trade to the United Way, to Hazel McCallion, to Mel Lastman, to the Financial Post, to even David Crombie. They're all saying that what you're doing is wrongheaded, that the direction of your whole mega-scheme is wrong. What we're asking you, Minister, is this: How many more experts, how many more of your friends, are going to have to call you to task before you realize that what you're doing is wrong?

**Hon Mr Leach:** The member has mentioned two or three people who are opposed to amalgamation and they favour amalgamation. The board of trade is strongly in favour of amalgamation. David Crombie is in favour of amalgamation. They're making statements that are not correct when they're indicating that the public generally is not supportive of amalgamation.

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** Dumping the social services on to the property tax. They say, "Too high a price to pay."

**The Speaker:** The member for Oriole, you have to come to order, you really do. It's making it very difficult for me to hear the minister. I appreciate any assistance you can give me. Minister.

**Hon Mr Leach:** If the opposition are really in favour of having public input into this bill, they'll assist us in getting it out to public hearings as early as we possibly can, as early as next week, so that the citizens of this area can have input into the process.

**The Speaker:** Final supplementary, the member for Fort York.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** Minister, yesterday I asked you about Mr Crombie's comments on your housing proposal, and you insisted that Mr Crombie was wrong and in fact everyone else is wrong except you, and that your big download had been discussed by the Who Does What panel. Instead, we've heard something different: There have been no discussions, no consultations and no preparations. What we have got from you is a big housing bomb, and Mr Crombie told us as much. What you have done is you have sent them a \$1.4-billion baby to care for with no feeding instructions and not even enough money to pay for the proper upkeep.

Minister, I ask you this: Where is Toronto going to find the \$200 million it needs for the urgent repairs of the Metro housing authority? Where is Toronto going to find the 200 million bucks? You tell me and you tell the city of Toronto that.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I mentioned in this House yesterday that this issue had gone to the Who Does What panel and I went back to my office yesterday to confirm that, and I can confirm that there was discussion at the Who Does What panel on this social housing issue. As a matter of fact, those discussions were initiated over a year ago by the municipalities.

For example, I have in my hand here a letter from the chairman of Halton region, who states, "I would like to advise that Halton region has endorsed the concept of the management of public housing stock by the Halton Non-Profit Housing Corp, the municipal non-profit housing provider in our region." They want to take over social housing in Halton. By the way, there is a cc to David Crombie, chair of the Who Does What panel.

## SCHOOL BOARDS

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a question of the Minister of Education and Training regarding the other mega-bill that we have before the House, Bill 104. The minister has been requested to meet with parents across Ontario. He has been meeting, but he has been meeting with chambers of commerce in Kitchener-Waterloo and in London. He hasn't met with parents, for instance, in Toronto, parents in wards 1 and 2 in the west end and wards 11 and 12, the education council for Franklin Public School in Riverdale from ward 10 in the east. They've all tried to get meetings with the minister, with no luck.

Last night he did meet with some parents at Annette public school in Toronto's west end to videotape the meeting of a select group of parents. Unfortunately, I guess, for the videotaping, other parents showed up to express their views. I'd like to know, from the format of the meeting last night, is this the kind of thing that you consider to be consultation with parents and will your videotape when it is edited show the whole night's proceedings, including the cries of —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I thank the honourable member for the question. I did attend last night a meeting, as I attend meetings across the province on a regular basis. This one was set up by the member for High Park-Swansea. It was an opportunity —

**Mr Wildman:** They ambushed you.

**The Speaker:** Well, I don't know. Let's find out. Minister.

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I'd like to inform the House and perhaps when the House is quiet I'll be able to inform it.

We had an opportunity last night, as I've had on many other occasions, to have a meeting with people who represent a wide variety of interests. I can tell you that members of the PTA were there in that meeting. There were members of OSSTF in the meeting. There were principals, elementary school teachers, high school teachers. A variety of people from a variety of different walks of life, all concerned about public education, were in that meeting, and we had a chance to talk about the reforms that we bring to Ontario's education system, including clearer responsibilities on governance and a reduction in the cost of governance in our schools so that we can direct funds into the classroom. We talked about the province finally taking on the cost of education and being able to assure every student in the province that there will be sufficient funds for a high-quality education. I'm proud of those initiatives and I'm glad to get out across the province and explain it to the people.

**Mr Wildman:** Last week in the House the minister said, "If there are changes that can be made to the legislation we've brought to this floor that improve education for children of Ontario, I'd be more than willing to have a look at those amendments."

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But last night, after hearing from the parents and hearing them say they disagree with the minister's



approach to the education of their children, the minister said to the reporters that the parents were misinformed or uninformed. I'd like to know from the minister, is that what he thinks, that anyone who questions his government's propaganda or program as set out, who questions the wisdom of his view of the future for the education system, just doesn't know what they're talking about?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I'm pleased to inform the member for Algoma that of course that is not the position I would take or any member of my government would take. We do find ourselves faced with people from the public, though, and I'm sure the member for Algoma will appreciate this, who have been misinformed by various people who have not got a clear idea of what we've got before this House. Shocking as it may seem, there are some people who are defenders of a system with mediocre student achievement.

We believe on this side of the House that we have to increase student achievement. There are some people who are part of a \$13-billion system who don't want to give up a particular special privilege or interest that they have. But most people are fair, reasonable and interested in improving the level of achievement by every student right across the province, and that's what this government is in favour of.

**Mr Wildman:** There seems to be an echo in this place from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I'd like to ask another question of the Minister of Education and Training.

I understand from the clerk of the committee that the committee has already received over 800 requests from parents, students, teachers and others concerned with education in Ontario to appear before the committee to make presentations on Bill 104. The minister has said that he wants to hear from the public. He can be guaranteed that many more will want to express their views before the committee. I know the parents' group People for Education has already written to the government House leader about this bill and asked for hearings.

Will the minister inform the government House leader that he believes there must be adequate opportunity for all people to be heard about Bill 104 and the changes in education, even if it takes six, seven weeks of hearings?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I know that the member for Algoma will share my confidence in the abilities of the government House leader to make sure there is a chance for public input. But I want to remind the member for Algoma of a couple of facts: First, we are responding, finally, as a government to 24 major reports that have been done in my lifetime in this province on education governance and finance; finally a government is responding to those requests. Second, one of those reports that has been done was commissioned by your government, sir, when it was in power, the Sweeney commission.

We asked every member in this House —

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** The member for Algoma, if you will let me respond, I can tell you. I asked every member of this chamber for input from their communities on Mr Sweeney's findings. I know that you contributed those, and we have observed those, and I think you'll see them reflected in the bill we have before this House. Every

single member who responded to that request has had their community's input to the ministry and it has been reflected in our bill, so I'm confident that we have already had an enormous amount of public consultation. We are willing to have further — I am proud of the bill that we put before this chamber.

#### TRUCKING SAFETY

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville):** I have a question for the Minister of Transportation. Over the course of the last several weeks there have been a number of high-profile incidents involving truck wheels flying where some have resulted in death, some in injury and some near misses. Would the minister share with the House today what plans he has to improve road safety in Ontario and over what period of time he intends to act?

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I certainly share the concern the honourable member has expressed of what is happening on our highways, especially with the reported numbers of lost wheels that have occurred so far this year. I believe that the problem has been highlighted to a point where these things most likely are being reported on a more common basis.

Needless to say, I want to assure the honourable member that this government will continue its efforts on truck safety. It has been an ongoing thing. I believe we started in October 1995, and we have implemented a lot of changes. But we are going to continue to build on that plan and it's going to be reflected in the future bill that we're going to be proposing in the spring, other deterrents that we're going to bring forward to make sure our highways are safe and truckers are going to pay attention to safety.

**Mr Duncan:** We have heard a litany, every time there's been an accident, from the government about what it has done to improve road safety, yet the accidents continue. The government has not responded to the Worona inquest in its entirety. The government has not hired as many officers as it originally promised to do in terms of enforcing road safety. As recently as this weekend, published reports are now saying that ministry documents are acknowledging that the number of wheel accidents in this province has more than doubled since you began your program.

Your program hasn't worked. Will you agree today to a legislative inquiry to address this matter in its entirety, in public, to make sure that the people of this province have the assurance that their roads will continue to be safe and that they can drive without fear of being hit by a truck tire?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** I want to reiterate the member's concerns. However, I want to point out that this government has done more for safety in the short period we have been a government than I believe the previous two governments did in 10 years. I want to say to the honourable member that MTO staff have stopped over 40,000 vehicles up to the fiscal year to date, and that is twice as many as happened in any previous fiscal year to date under previous governments. In the first seven months we took out of service 1,422 plates, which is nearly double what other administrations had done.



Mandatory wheel training has been initiated. Higher fines: We've raised the level of minimum fines and also have a maximum \$20,000 fine. We've lifted the axle weight moratorium that was contributing to highway accidents and damaging of infrastructure. We have done a lot of positive things. I know we have a long way to go. I'm willing to work with the member. If he has suggestions, I'd be glad to take them.

#### BAIL SUPERVISION PROGRAM

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** My question is to the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services. I'd like to go back to the issue of your cancellation of the bail release program as of March 31 of this year. Are you aware that on March 31 there will still be a considerable number of people who have been ordered by the courts to be supervised under the bail program? In Waterloo, for example, approximately 200 people will still be under such court orders.

In order to change those court orders those bail program clients will have to return to court, and that means a large number of court appearances involving justices of the peace, crowns, defence or duty counsel, clerks and so on, just to change those conditions of bail. Of course, your other option is simply to ignore the bail conditions ordered by the courts, conditions that are there to protect the public safety.

What do you intend to do on March 31 with all those clients who still remain? Are you going to clog up the courts more? Are you going to ignore the bail conditions? What is your plan?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** One of the options under consideration would be that the individuals who would remain under this program at the end of the date we've indicated it will expire, March 31, will be instructed to report to the nearest probation and parole office. In that way they will be required to comply with the reporting condition until the next scheduled bail hearing.

**Mrs Boyd:** By whom are they going to be ordered to do that? The issue is that they were put under the bail supervision program, not under probation and parole. The minister is well aware that the probation and parole officers in this province are already heavily burdened. They are unable to deal with the additional caseload that would be received by them and still maintain the public safety.

This is just another example of your government making a decision without looking at the impact. We found out that it wasn't until after you'd ordered the cancellation of this program that ministry officials actually went into the various programs and began to look at client files to see what the impact of this decision would be. It is quite clear that you have no idea what you are doing, that you are under such pressure to save money to pay for your tax cuts that you are simply grasping at straws and in the meantime endangering the public safety and leaving us in a position where we may be clogging the courts. Why don't you simply do the honourable thing and reverse this decision until you know what the impacts are?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** There were two studies commissioned during the time the NDP was in office. The one thorough investigation and review indicated there was no meaningful or measurable impact in terms of the remand population in our correctional facilities. The other study with respect to the justice system, the Cole-Gittens review, although supportive of the program generally, indicated it should not be the responsibility of the ministry of corrections.

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#### TEACHERS' LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr Gary Fox (Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings):** My question is to the Minister of Education and Training. The teachers' strike in Lennox and Addington has been dragging on since December 9, 1996. In my constituency office we are receiving more than 40 calls each day from concerned parents who are worried their children will lose their school year. These parents are telling me their children's education is being disrupted because of a labour dispute that has nothing to do with them. Minister, what are you going to do to help students and parents in Lennox and Addington?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I've been on record many times as saying I believe we need a change in the bargaining climate in the province of Ontario, that our professional teachers need to have a way of bargaining that doesn't hold to hostage the students and children of the province.

I'm very aware of what's going on in Lennox and Addington. We are in the 28th day; I understand today the 28th instructional day will be lost to those students. There have been 11 other job actions this year in other areas which have disrupted the normal relationship between teachers and students and parents. In fact, we've lost 17 million student days over the course of the last 20 years to job actions.

We are monitoring this. I wrote to both parties last week, asking them to please come to an agreement, to use all of their good offices to do that. I understand they are meeting today, trying to resolve their issues. Of course, we all wish them well at that. I am also considering all the actions we might take as a government that are provided to us under Bill 100. We are monitoring this very carefully.

**Mr Fox:** I received a call from a young high school student who is terrified she won't be able to graduate from Napanee District high school to attend Queen's University and eventually go to medical school. She called me in tears and asked me to do something to help her.

I am told that in the past all parties in this House have recognized the importance of helping students like this one and they have passed legislation in as quickly as 45 minutes. Minister, will you ask the opposition parties to help this young lady today so that she will be able to attend university next fall and pursue her dream of becoming a doctor?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Minister.

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** Let me begin my response by saying right at the start that in the past this chamber has



had a proud record, no matter which was the party in power at the time, that the interests of students have been non-partisan issues, and I expect that would continue in the future. There's a proud record of that.

I believe the reason for that is because all of us have felt in our constituencies the frustration of parents and students and teachers when the bargaining process grinds to a halt. We are looking into the confines of Bill 100 to see what actions might be appropriate. If an action at some point is appropriate to help break this logjam in the negotiations we will do so. But I want to emphasize one more time that this has not been a partisan issue in the past and I would not expect it to be in the future.

### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** My question is to the Minister of Health. In many Ontario communities — in Pembroke, Petrolia, Sudbury, Fort Erie, Sarnia, Chatham — thousands of people are going to arenas and town squares traumatized by what you, your department and your government are doing or are threatening to do by way of closing their community hospitals.

Your government is using as its principal mechanism for closing hospitals in Port Colborne and Pembroke a new hospital bed standard. On behalf of those thousands of people in communities like Fort Erie and St Catharines and Pembroke, can you tell this House today, and through this House all of those people and their elected representatives, which hospitals in Ontario communities of between 5,000 and 75,000 people today operate consistent with your government's new hospital bed standard?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** What I will say to the member opposite, and what I will tell the people of Ontario, is that this government is dealing with the health care issue in total, living within its promises of \$17.4 billion in terms of health care — a large chunk of that for hospitals, I might add — in the context of a \$2-billion reduction in health care from the federal Liberal government.

The ministry is attempting to provide better services through our hospitals in all our communities, better services by carrying on with the program begun by the previous government; where the previous government gave the district health councils \$26 million and asked them to look at the most efficient way of delivering hospital services in our communities. District health councils, including in Renfrew and Pembroke, are coming forward with recommendations. The restructuring commission is dealing with those recommendations, is having consultations with the general public, and there will be actions coming forward through the restructuring commission to make —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you, Minister. Supplementary.

**Mr Conway:** It is your hands that are around the neck of the Pembroke Civic Hospital. It is your hands that are threatening to squeeze the lifeblood out of the Sudbury General Hospital. It is your hands that are around the neck of the Hotel Dieu in St Catharines. Let there be no confusion: It is your hands; it is your policy. This is your doing.

On behalf of the thousands of people that are gathering in Petrolia, St Catharines, Pembroke, Sudbury, Sarnia, Chatham and several other communities, I ask you specifically, are there any hospitals in Ontario today that are operating in communities of between 5,000 and 75,000 population that meet your new hospital bed standard? More likely, do we have to go to some private health maintenance operation in Georgia, New Jersey or Ohio to find somebody in compliance with this new standard that is the wrecking ball that is going to slam shut and crush and end the Pembroke Civic Hospital, the Port Colborne General, the Hotel Dieu in St Catharines and several others in this province?

**Hon David Johnson:** I find it interesting to have the question from the member for Renfrew North, who was part of a government that started the closure of beds in Ontario. Over the last 10 years we have seen some 8,400 beds closed in the province. This government is attempting to come to grips with the problem of 8,400 beds which have been closed, providing better services in our hospitals right across Ontario through the restructuring commission.

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** Talk to the people from Pembroke.

**Hon David Johnson:** Over the catcalls, Mr Speaker — *Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** The member for St Catharines, I appreciate your comment, but the member for Oriole, I ask you to come to order. I couldn't quite hear what you said. It may have been out of order; I'm not sure. I'm sure it's not. I ask you to come to order, please.

**Hon David Johnson:** In terms of standards within individual communities, the restructuring commission, a panel of appointed experts who have great expertise in terms of community standards, is establishing those standards on a community-by-community basis. They're coming forward with the recommendations to make health care and hospital care better in the province.

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### TUITION FEES

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a question for the Minister of Education and Training. As the minister knows, students across Ontario in the post-secondary system are awaiting his government's announcement with regard to tuition fees for next year. The minister will know that in a presentation to the Smith panel there were a number of proposals made. He has frozen funding for the post-secondary institutions, colleges and universities, next year. Is he prepared to accede to the requests of the Canadian Federation of Students that he do the same for tuition fees?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I thank the member for Algoma for the question. We are considering the recommendations of the Smith commission and we have responded, in the freeze of our payments to universities and colleges for next year, well in advance of the time when that is normally announced.

We also hope to be able to announce what flexibility there may or may not be for institutions surrounding



tuition fees for the next year as early as we possibly can, but we believe that the report deserves to be read, deserves to be considered, and we are now talking with various people in the post-secondary sector about what the proper response should be.

I note that the Smith commission talked about making investments in our post-secondary education system, something this government asked the Smith commission to look into, wanted to get that information for, including the share of the private sector, the share of the government and of course the share of students. We'll be investigating that over the coming months and we hope to be able to make an announcement.

**Mr Wildman:** The coming months? Surely the announcement of next year's tuition fees will be sooner than that.

In dealing with the Smith panel, I hope the minister has looked at York University's submission. In a survey of York students, the university found that the average level of student indebtedness has doubled since 1994-95. The university concludes, "It is becoming increasingly clear that anticipated level of debt is affecting the decisions students make about post-secondary education."

In other words, students are not going to post-secondary education because of the fear of heavy debt. Is the minister considering changes to the student aid system, and when will we expect next year's students to know what possible changes there will be in the level of tuition they will have to pay?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** We are very aware of the fact that we need to improve the Ontario student assistance program. We have been studying for some time and working with our federal counterparts on an appropriate income-contingent loans package that will be available to students. As recently as the end of the last week, I wrote the minister responsible in Ottawa and asked him to move forward with all good speed, because I believe this will help our students meet their obligations for post-secondary education.

We have maintained our transfer payments to colleges and universities this year at over \$2 billion. We have established the post-secondary student opportunity trust fund for \$100 million, which our institutions have received very enthusiastically. We have asked them and they have put aside 10% of the increase in tuition from last year to help the students most in need — there is some \$16.2 million available now in that fund — and we increased OSAP funding last year by about \$100 million.

We recognize the need to give students the assistance to be able to take part in post-secondary education and we are working very hard to improve and make sure that those systems meet their needs now and in the future.

#### ACADEMIC TESTING

**Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West):** My question is to the Minister of Education and Training. Over the past several years Ontario students have written numerous national and international tests. The results of these have not been very encouraging. In the third international math and science test, released last fall, Ontario's students were unable to meet the Canadian average and just barely able

to meet the international achievement average. It's my understanding that the results of yet another national test were released today. Do today's tests show any improvement?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** In answer to the member's question, recently the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, released the results of the tests that were done on people who are 13 and 16 years old in all the provinces and territories of Canada. I regret to report that in these science tests our students in Ontario, in both age groups, performed below the national average. That is obviously not acceptable to this minister and it's not acceptable to any member of the government.

**Mrs Ross:** National and international tests indicate that Ontario is producing average students. I don't think anyone in this Legislature thinks these results are indicative of what Ontario students are able to achieve. What is this government doing to ensure that Ontario's students are the best in the world?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** In answer to the member's question, I am very proud of our record on moving forward in student achievement. As a matter of fact in our pledge to parents we have committed, as a government, to implementing a rigorous and demanding curriculum which will emphasize the basics: reading, writing, spelling, grammar, math, science, geography, Canadian history and technology. Our standards will be clear, measurable and comprehensive in all grades; finally, I might add, clear, measurable and comprehensive. We will measure those standards with province-wide tests and we have begun that this year. These changes will help our students lift their achievement to be ahead of the other provinces in Canada, not middle of the road.

We have also made the changes in a system that has produced mediocrity at great cost to a system that will take us to the future, that will provide us with the highest levels of student achievement in Canada. That is the objective of this government and that is the reason for our changes in education.

#### HAEMODIALYSIS

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** My question is to the Minister of Health. In August 1995 the Minister of Health promised \$25 million to bring dialysis to under- and non-served communities. Cornwall, unfortunately, is one of those communities. No dialysis is available, so residents travel to Kingston and Ottawa for treatment.

Reacting to the problem, local community health officials called on the Minister of Health. It took eight months, but the minister finally announced that dialysis would soon be available in care of a provider his ministry had pre-selected. A week later he pulled the plug on the decision and admitted an error in choosing the provider. He promised that a second provider would be selected very soon. That was eight months ago.

Minister, consider what it would be like to drive one and a half to two hours each way, three times a week, to receive basic medical attention. Are you going to follow through on the promise you made last April, and if so, when?



**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** I appreciate the question. Obviously that wasn't my particular promise but the promise of the former minister. I will endeavour to look into this matter and I'll get back to the member.

I know that the Ministry of Health has over the course of the last year made announcements in terms of reinvestment in dialysis. The ministry has made a great number of announcements about reinvesting in the health care system in Ontario, because the services currently, while they're good services, need to be improved, made better.

I will take your point and look particularly in terms of the Cornwall area and the dialysis program.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Supplementary.  
**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** Minister, there are a number of areas in terms of health care and you are simply not following up on promises you have made and your fellow colleagues have made in the area of health.

In particular in Windsor, the Windsor hospitals are no longer prepared to be the bad boy and take the hits for what the Conservative government is doing to health care in my community. Yesterday they released figures which show clearly that because of the Conservative government funding of our hospitals in Windsor and Essex county, we are below the Ontario average by \$42 million a year. Specifically that is \$122 per person, per year less in Windsor-Essex than anywhere else in Ontario.

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Will you stand today and ensure that through your policies you will in effect give us equity in funding in Windsor-Essex county?

**Hon David Johnson:** I will say to the member that hospitals are not funded on a per capita basis. The per capita funding might not include certain services in some areas which it includes in other areas, services such as mental health, long-term care and other services.

Having said that, I am concerned about equity for hospitals across Ontario. I am concerned with regard to the operating grants of the hospitals across Ontario. I am working on the operating grants for the 1997-98 fiscal year. The ministry is working very hard. I would expect an announcement in the very near future which will reflect the need for programs in various areas, which will reflect growth in population in various areas and which will reflect other factors, to bring an even greater equity in hospital funding in Ontario.

#### PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I have here a document entitled A Preliminary Summary of Provincial Announcement and the Implications on the City of Timmins, with regard to your latest announcements around your downloading a number of services on to municipalities.

Minister, I want to be clear here. Once the municipality gets those services that you're handing over to them, when you take into account the amount of taxes they're going to get from school assessment and what you're transferring on to them, the shortfall is \$12 million.

Now the question I have to you is very simply this: What can you say to the citizens of Timmins when it comes to what might happen to their property taxes when the city is faced with additional expenditures of \$12 million, for which they don't have the revenue? Can you guarantee the people in Timmins that they're not going to get a property tax increase as a result of your recent announcements?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** What I can assure the citizens of Timmins and the citizens of every municipality in Ontario is that when our proposals are implemented, after the phase-in period, when we know some municipalities may need some assistance, they'll all be better off and the vast majority of them will be able to introduce a property tax decrease. I hope that's the case in Timmins.

However, we also recognize that there are some municipalities that are going to require assistance and we have set up a \$1-billion fund for municipalities that need help in carrying out the programs we've asked them to be responsible for. They'll be able to draw on that fund as required. I don't know whether the municipality of Timmins falls into that category, but if it does, it would be able to apply for that fund.

**Mr Bisson:** The problem is this: The city of Timmins is learning, and the full implication of your cuts has yet to be calculated because we know there are a number of other announcements that are going to be made by your government, but at this point we're over \$12 million to the negative in additional expenditures that the city has to take. What's really appalling is that the officials of the city of Timmins at no time are getting any indication from the government in any kind of real way of exactly what it is you want them to do.

I want to draw your attention to something: There was in the last election a document that had the picture of the Premier on it. I want to remind you it was called the Common Sense Revolution. You probably know it well. In this Common Sense Revolution, you said: "We will work closely with municipalities to ensure that any actions we take will not result in an increase in local property taxes."

The city of Timmins is saying, "If we have to increase property taxes to assume the responsibility, it's 40%." The promise you made is (a) that property taxes would not go up and (b) that you would work with the municipalities. Minister, they haven't seen you. They haven't seen any of your officials. There's no real information coming on. What are you going to do to assist the communities like Timmins to be able to deal with what you're doing?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I am glad the member opposite brought out the Common Sense Revolution, because it does state in there that we will work closely with municipalities and we are working closely with municipalities, both in southern Ontario and in northern Ontario. My colleague the Minister of Northern Affairs has been in northern Ontario on an almost weekly basis to provide information to the citizens of northern Ontario.

This government has worked and developed policies to ensure that there will be no tax increases, and that applies to any tax, whether it's income tax, property tax or business tax.



**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** You were even scared to come out of your office to go to a cabinet meeting.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Where were you today, Al. The lights were on and nobody was home.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** Nobody was home.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Members for Welland-Thorold, Cochrane North and Fort York, come to order. Anything else? Motions? No motions.

**Mr Kormos:** When we came to the ministry the lights were on, nobody was home; the lights are on, the doors are barred.

**The Speaker:** Come to order means that you stop heckling.

## PETITIONS

### ONTARIO CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTE

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly:

"We, the undersigned, believe that helping reduce crime and abuse in our communities is our responsibility as employees of the Ministry of Correctional Services, as professionals in related fields and as concerned citizens;

"Closing institutions which provide specialized services to women and treatment to men does not achieve that goal;

"Physical, emotional and sexual abuse is often transmitted from one generation to the next, with tremendous cost to society;

"Treatment aimed at breaking that cycle must include the abuser so that another generation of children is not raised with the same destructive lessons;

"As Mr Ross Virgo stated, the Ontario Correctional Institute is a therapeutic community known around the world for their techniques;

"Research statistics support anecdotal evidence that we are effective in changing abusive behaviour;

"A therapeutic community cannot exist in a super-prison;

"Save victims and money by keeping open what works open, and request a response from the Minister, Solicitor General Bob Runciman."

### WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Cochrane North.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** South.

**The Speaker:** I'm sorry. Member for Cochrane South.

**Mr Bisson:** I know the member for Cochrane North does a wonderful job, but I represent the riding of Cochrane South and do just as well.

I have a petition here, speaking of that, from the citizens of the riding of Cochrane South, and it reads as follows:

"We, the following undersigned citizens, beg leave to petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the government of Ontario has plans to make changes to the Workers' Compensation Act which will have a negative impact on workers; and

"Whereas the change includes reducing the payout to 85% of earnings, eliminating various types of injuries and having employees apply to their employer for benefits; and

"Whereas the WCB has a surplus of \$510 million in 1995; and

"Whereas in 1994 there was an uncollected employer debt of \$173 million;

"Therefore, be it resolved that the government of Ontario stop its plans to privatize WCB and that the extensive provincial-wide hearings be held before any changes are made to the Workers' Compensation Board, and further be it resolved that recommendations to privatize will result in an increase of 13% in administrative costs."

### HIGHWAY 17

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** I have a petition from the town of Thessalon. It reads:

"We, the undersigned residents of the town of Thessalon in the district of Algoma would like to extend our appreciation to the Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Al Palladini, and the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, the Honourable Chris Hodgson, for their commitment to northern Ontario, and in particular the district of Algoma, for road improvements to Highway 17 from Sault Ste Marie to Bruce Mines.

"As part of this commitment to northern Ontario, we request that the road construction be continued in our direction, so that years of neglect to our highway system can be rectified."

### EDUCATION REFORM

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** I have a petition, and it reads this way:

"We believe that the heart of education in our province is the relationship between student and teacher and that the human and rational dimension should be maintained and extended in any proposed reform. As Minister of Education, you should know how strongly we oppose many of the secondary reform recommendations being proposed by your ministry and government.

"We recognize and support the need to review secondary education in Ontario. The proposal for reform as put forward by your ministry is substantially flawed in several key areas: reduced instruction time, reduction of instruction in English, reduction of quality teaching personnel, academic work, experience not linked to education curriculum, and devaluation of formal education.

"We strongly urge your ministry to delay the implementation of secondary school reform so that all interested stakeholders — parents, students, school councils, trustees and teachers — are able to participate in a more meaningful consultation process which will help ensure that a high quality of publicly funded education is provided."

I've signed this petition.



1520

## HIGHWAY 17

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** Like the member for Grey-Owen Sound, I too have received a petition from the Coalition of Citizens for a Better Algoma, including such residents of the town of Thessalon as Howard Delaney, Natalie Carson and Jack Hill. The petition reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned residents of the town of Thessalon in the district of Algoma, would like to extend our appreciation to the Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Al Palladini, and the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, the Honourable Chris Hodgson, for their commitment to northern Ontario, and in particular the district of Algoma, for road improvements to Highway 17 from Sault Ste Marie to Bruce Mines.

"As part of this commitment to northern Ontario, we request that highway road construction be continued in an east direction so that years of neglect to our highway system can be rectified."

It's signed by several citizens and I've affixed my signature to this worthwhile petition.

## NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I've affixed my signature to it.

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition from the United Food and Commercial Workers, Locals 175 and 633, submitted by Herb McDonald on behalf of their tens of thousands of members in the province of Ontario. It's a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and Premier Harris.

"We, the undersigned, oppose your government's plan to dismantle the workers' compensation system including reducing benefits; excluding claims for repetitive strain injuries, muscle injuries, strains, sprains, stress, harassment and most occupational diseases; eliminating pension supplements; handing over control of our claims to our employers for the first four to six weeks after injury; privatizing WCB to large insurance companies; integrat-

ing sick benefits into WCB; eliminating or restricting the Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal, WCAT; including eliminating worker representation on the board and eliminating the bipartite WCB board of directors.

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand a safe workplace, compensation if we are injured, no reduction in benefits, improved re-employment and vocational rehabilitation, an independent appeal structure with worker representation, access to the office of the worker adviser, that the WCAT be left intact and that the WCB bipartite board of directors be reinstated."

As I am in support of this petition, I add my name to theirs.

## USER FEES

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** I just want you to know that I keep receiving these petitions against the \$2 user fee for seniors. I'll read the petition, which is as follows:

"Whereas the Ministry of Health has started to charge senior citizens and social assistance recipients a \$2 user fee for each prescription filled; and

"Whereas seniors on a fixed income do not significantly benefit from the income tax savings created by this user copayment fee or from other non-health user fees; and

"Whereas the perceived savings to health care from the \$2 user fee will not compensate for the suffering and misery caused by this user fee or the painstaking task involved to fill out the application forms; and

"Whereas the Minister of Health, as an opposition MPP, has said and written in fact that his party would not endorse legislation that will punish patients to the detriment of health care in Ontario;

"We, the undersigned Ontario residents, strongly urge the government to repeal this user fee plan because the tax-saving user fee concept is not fair, is not sensitive and not accessible to low-income or fixed-income seniors, and lest we forget, our province's seniors have paid their dues by collectively contributing to the social, economic, moral and political fabric of Canada."

I'm signing my John Henry to this petition because I agree with it.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition from the University of Windsor, the School of Music, of course from Windsor, Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of workers for many years; and

"Whereas the centre and clinics have made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health and safety and the reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work;



"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers; and

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that the education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

I add my name to theirs.

### HOTEL DIEU HOSPITAL

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"Since the Hotel Dieu Hospital has played and continues to play a vital role in the delivery of health care services in St Catharines and the Niagara region;

"Since Hotel Dieu has modified its role over the years as part of a rationalization of medical services in St Catharines and has assumed the position of a regional health care facility in such areas as kidney dialysis and oncology;

"Since the Niagara region is experiencing underfunding in the health care field and requires more medical services and not fewer services;

"Since Niagara residents are required at present to travel outside of the Niagara region to receive many specialized services that could be provided in city hospitals and thereby not require local patients to make difficult and inconvenient trips down our highways to other centres;

"Since the Niagara hospital restructuring committee used a Toronto consulting firm to develop its recommendations and was forced to take into account a cut of over \$40 million in funding for Niagara hospitals when carrying out its study;

"Since the population of the Niagara region is older than that in most areas of the province and more elderly people tend to require more hospital services;

"We, the undersigned, request that the government of Ontario keep the election commitment of Premier Mike Harris not to close hospitals in our province, and we call upon the Premier to reject any recommendation to close Hotel Dieu Hospital in St Catharines."

I affix my signature. I'm in full agreement.

### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition from the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3440, in Kirkland Lake, forwarded to me by Linda Petrie, the vice-president, who is also a certified health and safety representative.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Harris government began a process to open the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario; and

"Whereas this act is the single most important piece of legislation for working people since it is designed to protect our lives, safety and health while at work and

allow us to return home to our families in the same condition in which we left; and

"Whereas the government has made it clear that they intend to water down the act and weaken the rights of workers under the law, including the right to know, the right to participate and especially the right to refuse; and

"Whereas this government has already watered down proper training of certified committee members;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario not to alter the Occupational Health and Safety Act or erode the rights of workers any further and ensure strict enforcement of the existing legislation."

I add my name to theirs.

### EDUCATION REFORM

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly:

"Whereas proposed changes to secondary school education in Ontario appear to be driven by financial concerns and not by educational objectives;

"Whereas reform of curriculum appears to be an afterthought;

"Whereas sufficient time and resources are essential to ensure that the reforms are done properly; and

"Whereas the areas defined for consultation by the ministry and the questions posed are too restrictive and do not include many of the fundamental aspects of the proposals;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to delay the reform of secondary school education until such time as the practical aspects of the reforms can be addressed."

I affix my signature to this petition as well.

1530

### TVONTARIO

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** I have a petition in opposition to the privatization of TVOntario.

"We, the undersigned, strongly protest any plans to privatize TVOntario. The privatization of TVOntario would jeopardize Wawatay radio network's native language programming and Wahsa distance education services because both depend on TVO's distribution system."

That's signed by constituents of mine from North Caribou Lake, Weagamow Lake and throughout the north. I attach my name to that petition as well.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### MENTAL HEALTH AMENDMENT ACT, 1997

#### LOI DE 1997 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA SANTÉ MENTALE

Mr Patten moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 111, An Act to amend the Mental Health Act /  
Projet de loi 111, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé mentale.

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** I'd like to thank the assembly for accepting first reading of a private member's bill. The bill is designed to amend the Mental



Health Act to ensure that a person who suffers from a mental disorder may be admitted to a psychiatric facility as an involuntary patient if the disorder is likely to result in serious physical impairment or in a substantial physical or mental deterioration of that person.

As members will know, currently the act provides that a person can only be admitted involuntarily to a psychiatric facility if the mental disorder will likely result in serious bodily harm to the person or another person or in serious and imminent physical impairment to that person. This bill is designed to amend that.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** I apologize to the House. I should have asked before Mr Patten spoke to the bill, is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

#### REMEMBRANCE DAY OBSERVATION ACT, 1997

#### LOI DE 1997 SUR L'OBSERVATION DU JOUR DU SOUVENIR

Mr Leadston, on behalf of Mr Kells, moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 112, An Act to observe two minutes of silence on Remembrance Day / Projet de loi 112, Loi visant l'observation de deux minutes de silence le jour du Souvenir.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Mr Gary L. Leadston (Kitchener-Wilmot):** The bill declares that the people of Ontario will observe two minutes of silence at 11 am on Remembrance Day in honour of those who died in war and on peacekeeping missions. Its purposes are to be achieved through voluntary observance and through our collective desire to remember. The bill sets out a number of suggestions for promoting the observance of this silence.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### TIME ALLOCATION

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** I move that pursuant to standing order 46 or special order of the House and notwithstanding any other standing order of the House relating to Bill 103, An Act to replace the seven existing municipal governments of Metropolitan Toronto by incorporating a new municipality to be known as the City of Toronto, when Bill 103 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be referred to the standing committee on general government;

That the standing committee on general government shall be authorized to meet to consider the bill on the following days:

On Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays during the weeks of February 3, 1997, February 10, 1997, February 17, 1997, February 24, 1997, and on Monday, March 3, 1997, and Wednesday, March 5, 1997, and that the

committee be authorized to meet from 9 am to 12 pm, 3:30 pm to 6 pm, and 7 pm to 9 pm on such days to receive public submissions on the bill;

That the standing committee on general government shall be authorized to meet to consider the bill for clause-by-clause consideration commencing Thursday, March 6, 1997, from 9 am to 12 pm and from 3:30 pm until completion of clause-by-clause;

All proposed amendments shall be filed with the clerk of the committee by 7 pm on March 5, 1997. At 5 pm on Thursday, March 6, 1997, those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved and the chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. Any divisions required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 128(a).

The committee shall report the bill to the House on the first available day following completion of clause-by-clause consideration that reports from committees may be received. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on the date provided, the bill shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House.

That upon receiving the report of the standing committee on general government, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, which question shall be decided without debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading;

That one sessional day shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill. At 5:45 pm on such day, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment;

That in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes and no deferral of any division pursuant to standing order 28(g) shall be permitted.

I now have an amendment to incorporate a couple of other facets into that motion.

I move at this time that the motion be amended by deleting the words "or special order of the House and notwithstanding any other standing order of the House," in the first and second lines of the first paragraph and inserting in lieu thereof "and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House," and;

That the motion be further amended by striking out the seventh and eighth paragraphs and inserting the following in lieu thereof:

That upon receiving the report of the standing committee on general government, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, which question shall be decided without debate or amendment, and the bill shall be referred to the committee of the whole House;

That one hour shall be allotted to consideration of the bill in committee of the whole House. At the end of that time, those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of



the committee of the whole House shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto and report the bill to the House. Any divisions required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put, the members called in once, and all deferred divisions taken in succession. All amendments proposed to the bill shall be filed with the Clerk of the Assembly by 2 pm on the sessional day on which the bill is considered in committee of the whole House, and that notwithstanding standing order 9(a), the House be authorized to meet beyond its normal adjournment time until completion of the committee of the whole stage of Bill 103;

That upon receiving the report of the committee of the whole House, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, which question shall be decided without debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading;

That one sessional day be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill. At the end of that sessional day, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment;

That in the case of any divisions relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes and no deferral of any division pursuant to standing order 28(g) shall be permitted.

1540

I rise today in support of this —

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** We have agreed on the time.

**Hon David Johnson:** Yes. I should say at the outset — thank you to the whip from the third party — that the agreement is that the government will use the time until 4 o'clock and the remaining time will be split equally between the two opposition parties until the vote is taken later this afternoon. So my time is limited, and I will say that —

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Agreed.

**Hon David Johnson:** Agreed?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Agreed.

**Hon David Johnson:** My time is limited and I will say that the government has attempted to bring this matter forward for debate. This is an issue of tremendous significance not only to the people of Metropolitan Toronto, but this is an issue of tremendous significance to the people of Ontario and indeed, I would submit, to the people of Canada.

The Metropolitan Toronto area has been evolving over many years. I guess it was in 1967 that some 13 municipalities were amalgamated into the six local governments we have today, and of course the regional government persisted at that time. The bill that we have to debate, Bill 103, would be a further step along that evolution in terms of amalgamating all of those governments, those seven remaining governments, into one government.

This government feels that there should be significant debate, that not only the people but this House should be debating this issue, because there are key questions. There are questions of communities. I might say in my

few minutes that I have a strong sense of community. I was not born in East York but I was privileged to serve on the East York council for over 20 years, both as alderman and as mayor. East York is a strong community. Indeed, within East York there are two strong communities, because over my many years in East York I have become accustomed to people talking about either the "town" or the "township," and they are referring to the former town of Leaside or to the former township of East York. Both entities, which were created early in the century — Leaside in 1913, the township of East York in 1924 — have that long sense of history. That history, I might say, in Leaside —

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** Talk to the present mayor.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Kingston and The Islands, come to order.

**Hon David Johnson:** — has persisted even after 1967, when Leaside was amalgamated into East York, and yet still today people talk about the town of Leaside, still today people take pride in the town of Leaside through their local organizations, local community get-togethers. Well they should, and well should people take pride in the now borough of East York and the former township of East York.

That is a pride that persists in our communities: in the Beaches community, for example, which never has been a municipality, but still there's a pride; in Willowdale, for example; in Forest Hill, Swansea and so many communities that we have across Metropolitan Toronto. The government is interested in hearing the comments of people interested in ensuring that whatever we come forward with at the end of the day, that community pride and that sensitivity to neighbourhood needs persist. We are interested that people within their communities feel a responsiveness to a new kind of government, whatever new kind of government does come forward. They have to feel involved.

They're concerned about what happens on their streets and in their neighbourhoods: speeding on their streets, the repair of their sidewalks, the local planning, the local recreation, so many programs that they're concerned about. I'm quite confident that once this gets out to public debate, we will hear those kinds of concerns and we will hear good ideas as to how those sensitivities can be not only retained but increased through a new model.

At the same time, we know from many organizations, the board of trade, for example, within Metropolitan Toronto, that business is suffering, jobs. Particularly under the previous government, some 200,000 jobs were lost in Metropolitan Toronto. If you ask the board of trade why, "What is the number one problem that we've had for those jobs?" they will tell you that the municipal tax rate is overburdening in Metropolitan Toronto, that we need to do something about the property tax in Metropolitan Toronto, and they would like to get education off the property tax, which we are proposing for the residential side. They would like to have a lowering of the property tax in Metropolitan Toronto to make it competitive.

**Ms Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** You keep it off for business.



**Hon David Johnson:** Well, Mr Speaker, the government believes that through this new structure, this new one-city structure, there will be efficiencies, there will be a reduction in costs, and accordingly there will be a lower tax rate on to the people and businesses of Metropolitan Toronto.

The municipality of Metropolitan Toronto itself has said through a study, through a consultant, that some \$40 million can be saved in fire services alone, and there are many other ideas that are coming forward.

Those are the kinds of things that we will hear in the public debate, and I look forward to it. We would like to have more debate in this House, but unfortunately we have encountered adjournments, bell-ringing. Somebody has calculated that all the adjournments and the bell-ringing together have wasted over five hours, almost five and a half hours of legislative time in this House, which could have been much more gainfully directed towards debate of this bill, but unfortunately was not.

So we've had to bring in this motion today to outline the public hearing process, to permit the people of Ontario, the people of Metropolitan Toronto, to be involved, to be able to speak. I'm pleased that that's taking place and we are permitting over 100 hours of public hearing debate through this motion that is here today. That, I might say, is considerably more hours than was permitted on the rent control bill under the previous government or the automobile insurance bill under the Liberal government. It's a considerable amount of time, three days a week over a five-week period, and we are looking forward to having a great number of citizens, of public groups, of ratepayer groups, of municipalities coming forward and helping us make this Metropolitan Toronto area a municipality that we will continue to be proud of, that will serve us well, that will lower our costs, that will identify our neighbourhoods and our communities, be sensitive to those neighbourhoods and communities, that will be the great place to live, not only what it has been over the last number of years, the last number of decades, but as we enter into the next century.

With those comments, Mr Speaker, my time has expired. I believe that our next speaker will now take the floor.

1550

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Further debate?

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** I too would like to say a few things about the need for this motion. As recently as last night I had the opportunity to participate in another town hall meeting organized by a rate-payers' group, in fact in the riding of Isabel Bassett. Here in downtown Toronto there's no doubt there's a very different message that one gets than you do out in the ridings in Scarborough that I'm more familiar with. But across this city, across all of Metro Toronto, the people have said loud and clear what they want is a chance to have input in this process. We have explained to them that, as the thousands of bills that have gone through this chamber have all been treated, this bill should be treated no differently.

There are two appropriate venues to give input to any provincial piece of legislation. The first is to the MPPs directly. I have every confidence that the members

opposite have been just as accessible as my colleagues in terms of meeting with people in our constituency offices, meeting with them down here at Queen's Park, taking their calls, their letters and their faxes and responding to them. That has been going on since this bill was first introduced. In fact, it's been going on since the first speculation occurred in the newspaper, and the bottom line is, based on that, we already have a pretty clear indication of where the people in our ridings stand on this issue.

But more than that, more than the direct input to the MPP, as the members opposite know, as they themselves undertook for every bill they brought forward, there are legislative committee hearings that take place on this bill. The bottom line is that is the second appropriate venue for people to have input. We have guaranteed that there will be over 100 hours of sitting time. I won't say it's unprecedented, because there are a handful of bills, a mere handful, that the other parties ever allowed to have that much time. There were very, very few bills that ever had 100 hours of debate. But we think this is a significant enough bill, based on the input we've received so far, to guarantee that there's adequate time to hear the concerns of the people from all across Metro Toronto — not just downtown Toronto, but from across all of Metro.

The fact of the matter is there's a really good reason for the motion here today. The members opposite, who do a great job of telling people outside this chamber that they really want to ensure that the government has the chance to listen, that they really want to put our feet to the fire, then have indulged in every procedural time-wasting thing they could do to guarantee that the people of Toronto won't have a chance. They have stood in the way of people being able to give input to the legislative committee.

Instead of ensuring that the hundreds of people who have written to the clerk, who have said, "We want to come to those committee hearings," instead of accommodating them —

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** You will shut down second reading debate. This is what you are doing. You will shut it down, muzzling the people.

**The Speaker:** Order. The member for Cochrane North, I appreciate your interventions but you should be in your seat. It's very difficult as it is.

**Mr Gilchrist:** I just remind those who may not have a chance to watch the parliamentary channel every day that on January 14, one and a half hours was wasted through dilatory tactics put on by the opposition party. On January 15, an additional hour and a half was wasted. The bottom line is that in those three hours right there the opposition members would have had a chance to stand in their place and say substantive things, substantive criticisms if they really believe it. If they really think this bill is flawed, they would have a chance.

**Ms Lankin:** So why did we do it? Why did we have to do it?

**Mr Gilchrist:** The member for Beaches-Woodbine, who has a riding in Toronto, would have had a chance to stand in her place and say why she is opposed to this bill. Instead, they have hidden behind the skirts of the bell-ringing. They've hidden outside this chamber. They have



absolutely avoided their obligations to articulate the views in this chamber and they have stymied the ability for the people of this great city to come in and give input to the committee hearing process. So for them to have the gall to suggest that this motion is not necessary — it's critical. It is critical that we get on with the process of making sure that the people have input.

The previous two governments used time allocation on a regular basis: 28 times over a 10-year period, with the NDP doing it 23 of those times. In fact the rules under which this motion is brought forward today were promulgated by the third party.

The NDP government changed the standing orders. Why? To limit debate. In this case we're using it to promote the opportunity to have debate where it really matters: in committee hearings. This is not being brought in to then move immediately to third reading; it's being brought in to go to the committee hearing process. We want to start next week, with no further delay. We want to start next week to listen to the people and to hear their concerns.

As the member himself knows — I hope he's not suggesting that all the times his government held committee hearings, they didn't listen; that you weren't there just reading a book or wasting the taxpayers' time. I'm proud of the fact that on the committees I've sat on so far, every single government bill has had government amendments arising from what we've heard from the people. That's what we've heard. That has been the track record of this government.

We are open; we are accessible. The hearings are the venue to allow the people of Toronto to speak their piece and to help us craft a bill that will accomplish the aims we all should share of more efficient government, lower costs, ending duplication and waste and providing the kind of framework in Metro Toronto to carry it forward into the 21st century as the most efficient possible mechanism for the delivery of services to its citizens.

I think my colleague Mr Turnbull would like to say a few words.

**Mr David Turnbull (York Mills):** It's very interesting to be rising on this particular point given the fact that what we are debating is a time allocation motion under the House rules that the NDP brought in when they were the government. I guess in those famous words of Bob Rae, "That was then; this is now."

It is typical that there is a negotiation which occurs between the government and the opposition on the amount of time and the venue of any discussions which are held with the public. This has occurred, and in fact we are giving a huge amount of time in public hearings, far greater than the NDP ever did.

I cannot reflect back from personal experience on what the Liberals did, but I am aware that it was under the Liberals that they brought in time allocation, for example, at the time of the auto insurance debate, in which one of the NDP members debated, filibustered for 17 hours.

Of course that isn't possible now, due to the fact that the NDP changed this, but at least there was debate from the opposition in those days of what they saw wrong in a bill at second reading; the substantive debate of an issue, which is when debate is supposed to occur. But to

date, all we have seen is bell-ringing from the NDP and opposition tactics to stop the passage of this debate.

It is perfectly correct, yes, that the NDP, both outside in front of the press and in House leaders' meetings, have said they're going to try and stop us. This frankly is legitimate for an opposition party to try and do, but for them to come afterwards and suggest, given the fact that we are unable to get to the substantive debate of this issue, that in some way we are being undemocratic makes me think in terms of the H word, which we're not allowed to utter in this House.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Go ahead, tell us what it is.

**Mr Wildman:** The hypocritical oath?

**Mr Turnbull:** I think you have an idea of it.

You cannot have it every which way. The fact is that when the NDP brought in the House rules — and I agree with the House leader for the Liberals that they voted against it. You will recall, House leader for the Liberals, there was a great deal of pressure brought by the NDP at the time on the opposition parties — "Unless you accept those changes, we'll make even tougher changes" — and so they were passed. They had a majority government.

**Mr Bradley:** The Speaker didn't vote for them. I don't think the whip did either.

**Mr Turnbull:** I think there's a great deal of wisdom in what my friend from St Catharines says, but the fact is you are the people who have stopped progress of second reading debate.

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**Ms Lankin:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: When you were out of the chair and we started this debate, there was in fact all-party agreement that the Conservative Party would speak until 4 of the clock, which it is now, and the remainder of the time would be split between the two opposition parties.

**The Speaker:** It just turned to 4 o'clock as you were on your feet.

**Mr Turnbull:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Since the member from the NDP interrupted the time prior to 4 o'clock, I will just end off my debate by saying, yes, we stick to our deals; they don't.

**The Speaker:** You are on a point of order, so the member for York Mills has the floor now.

**Mr Turnbull:** It is merely the fact that we offered them an opportunity to have full, wholesome debate at second reading. The NDP refused to have it. That is why the time allocation motion is on the floor.

**Mrs Caplan:** Rarely have we seen a piece of legislation before this House that has the kind of significance of Bill 103. Under normal circumstances, I think we might have expected a white paper, a green paper, draft legislation, full hearings. The reason I say that is because Metropolitan Toronto is a wonderful city. It is considered one of the best of the world. When we see the kind of legislation that has been brought forward, that is going to have potentially a devastating impact on our community, on our democracy, it requires the community to feel engaged fully in the democratic process.

I agree with the government House leader in his remarks about the significance of this bill. I also agree with the government House leader about our sense of



community pride and the wonderful city of Metropolitan Toronto that we live in and our pride in our individual municipalities within Metropolitan Toronto. I served for six and a half years on the council of North York and I know that the people of that city can access their local councillors, can access their mayor, can feel a part of, can feel listened to. I fear that this proposal of the government is an assault on local democracy and it devalues what we hold so dear in Ontario, which is our quality of life. It threatens to do that.

One of the saddest experiences for me as a member of this House has been the deliberate devaluation of elected office that this government's rhetoric has produced. We know the population is cynical. We know they don't particularly like politicians. But this government has been fostering that cynicism with legislation entitled the Fewer Politicians Act. I've spoken to that and I will say to you that, once again, Bill 103 is presented to the public with the rhetoric of eliminating politicians. That's the rationale.

I have always retained and maintained an open mind when it comes to making changes. I'm comfortable in a changing environment. I'm willing to make changes that are going to be better. One of the things I require to give me that comfort is evidence. When it comes to governance and the governing structures of local municipalities in the greater Toronto area, I look at all the evidence that has been produced over the years and I say to you that there is no evidence the government's proposals for creating an amalgamated city of Toronto are going to solve any of the problems we have, and we do have problems. I don't believe it will solve those problems because there's no evidence to suggest it will.

My fear, which is shared by all those who have taken the time to review the evidence, is that we are going to see services decline to the lowest common denominator and taxes increase. That is the evidence from those jurisdictions around the world which have embarked on amalgamation exercises of this magnitude. All the evidence suggests that you lose the benefits of economy of scale when you get over the size of about a million.

I was impressed this morning to listen to Mr Paul Pagnuelo, who took the time to come before our task force. He represents the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. I want you to know that as I quote what he said, I don't always agree with everything they have to say, but what he says here is based on their research:

"Our research concludes that amalgamation will produce the exact opposite effect of what everyone wants. Everyone wants lower costs, lower taxes and maintenance of services." He says: "This plan by the government will produce higher costs and higher taxes. The perceived savings by eliminating six city halls and their separate bureaucracies are far less than the higher costs which would be associated with a megacity. The empirical evidence worldwide is that higher, not lower, unit costs are associated with larger governments."

That is the evidence, so you have to say, "Why is the government doing this?" There are two parts to what they are doing. One part is Bill 103, which is the amalgamation into one city of Toronto. The second part is the announcement of who does what. Those two are linked

and the reason they are doing one, amalgamation, Bill 103, is so that they can do part two and hopefully nobody will notice that in between they are going to cut provincial support to municipalities and they are going to cut provincial support to education.

We estimate the size of those cuts to be \$2 billion or more. We know the downloading that will come from the announcements this week of the shift to the municipal taxpayer of long-term care, welfare, ambulance services, public health, all those social services which are redistributing income, and in many ways — another word for it is "distributive justice" — those have traditionally and rightly belonged with the provincial government.

All those who understand the importance of local government will remind the province that it is their responsibility to look after those most vulnerable in our society. Those are the soft services, the social services, and they must be funded through the income tax and provincial revenues because they are unstable. If there's anything municipalities need it is stability in their planning because without stability you will see property taxes rise, and rise dramatically at times of economic downturn. We all know that the economic cycles have their ups and their downs and municipalities cannot cope in that environment and certainly property taxpayers will not be able to cope.

The government's own panel on Who Does What, when they got wind of the government's intention to take education tax off and replace that with the social services, welfare, child care, long-term care, social housing, said: "Whoa, don't do it. If you have to make a choice between education and social services, leave education on the property taxes." That was David Crombie. When you get David Crombie, Anne Golden, John Sewell, Mel Lastman, Paul Pagnuelo, the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Toronto, Barbara Hall, all the mayors within Metropolitan Toronto, and a significant number of the elected leadership of the greater Toronto area, some 25 out of 28 individuals, all saying to this government, "You've got it wrong. You are going to fundamentally damage the municipalities and you are going to hurt the property taxpayers and you are going to hurt those people who need stable services," when you ask, "Why has the government done this?" the one thing we know — and we heard that this morning at our hearings — is that education support is far more predictable a cost than welfare, child care and long-term care.

1610

We know that our population is aging, we know that our senior citizens are getting older and we know that the pressures for services in the long-term-care sector will place a burden on municipalities and on property taxpayers that they will simply not be able to afford. What will happen is that you will see people head to the cities where the services are available, particularly cities like Metropolitan Toronto, and you will see inadequate and unequal services across this province based on the property tax assessment in those local communities. That runs so contrary to everything we have ever believed in in this province. It is a value that we are seeing this government cavalierly cast aside.

I agree with the architects and the authors who are speaking out in unprecedented numbers, and I fear this



government is not listening. This time allocation is a closure motion. This government is invoking closure on one of the most significant issues of our day, and that is because the economy of Metropolitan Toronto and the economy of the greater Toronto area, the economy of this region, is very important to the economic health of this province. You tamper with it at your risk.

I believe in local democracy. I believe in democracy. What the government is doing today has a cavalier disregard for democracy. A basic tenet of our democracy is responsibility and accountability. The policies of this government as it devolves social services on the backs of property taxpayers and amalgamates Metropolitan Toronto with inadequate hearings, with inadequate discussion, with inadequate research and impact studies, with inadequate information to the people who need to be able to understand what they are doing — I agree with Jack Diamond when he says that responsibility and accountability are best assured at the local level and we need to strengthen, not weaken, local municipalities.

I am concerned about the warning we are hearing from all of those who understand the implications of Bill 103, those who say that these proposals from the provincial government will begin the downward spiral. What they mean by that is that the economic impact must be considered. What they mean is to look at the American cities and not follow down their path. I agree with Judy Matthews when she says that her greatest fear is the collapse of our community.

Bill 103 is about far more than the number of politicians. Bill 103 is about far more than the name of a city of 2.3 million people. Bill 103 is about the economic health and vitality of the province of Ontario. It is about how our communities will feel about themselves. It is about not only how we are governed but the services we will receive. That, coupled with the province's policy decisions to dump on the local municipal taxpayers a burden that they cannot afford, will have a devastating effect on the municipality of Metropolitan Toronto and a devastating effect on the province of Ontario.

I plead with this government: Don't worry about saving face when you are asked to reconsider this ill-gotten and misguided proposal. Worry about saving Ontario, worry about saving Ontario's municipalities and worry about saving the property taxpayers of this province from an impossible and undue burden. I ask this government to rethink Bill 103, to delay it and not to proceed with this time allocation motion which is going to invoke closure on one of the most significant pieces of legislation and bills before this Legislature.

I am pleased to participate in this debate and I hope the government is listening.

**Mr Wildman:** I'm disappointed to have to rise to debate this kind of a motion here today in this House, particularly when we consider that we have before us the most significant restructuring of municipal governance, not only in this city but right across Ontario, that has been brought forward for over 100 years, and I'm not exaggerating at all in saying that. This is related also to other pieces of legislation that were announced in the mega-week, the legislation on educational governance and so on.

The member for Scarborough East, for instance, in his presentation in the debate said that this motion was required and necessary because the NDP was attempting to stall the legislation. He also said that we had said outside of this place that we wanted the people of Metropolitan Toronto to have a say and have input but that in fact we were preventing that. I want to clarify something for the member, since he wasn't apparently in attendance at the mass meetings that have taken place across this city.

We said clearly to the people of Metropolitan Toronto, we said clearly at those meetings and we said clearly to the government House leader that yes, indeed, we were attempting to stall this legislation. There was a reason we were attempting to stall it, because the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, who is responsible for this legislation in this House, had made it clear at the outset that he wanted this legislation passed by the end of February, he said at one point, that he wanted it through. He didn't care if there were going to be any referendums held. He didn't care if there were any votes by the people of Metropolitan Toronto. He was going to ignore it, and the Premier also said that it would be ignored, that they wouldn't make any difference one way or the other.

We used the only mechanism available to us as an opposition party, as a minority in this House, and that was to stall the government legislation. We stalled it for a number of reasons. We stalled it because we wanted to force the government to agree to hold adequate hearings so that the people and groups across Metropolitan Toronto who want to have a say, democratic input into this legislation, would have the opportunity to do so. We also wanted to stall the legislation so that the groups out there, the grass-roots organizations that are organizing to prevent this devastation for this community, for Toronto and all of the communities here, the six cities that make up Metropolitan Toronto, could organize.

Frankly, I'm proud of our role, along with other members of the opposition and all of the people out there in Metropolitan Toronto who have been organizing around this issue, because we have done a number of things. The people of Metropolitan Toronto, the city of Toronto in particular, but other areas in all of the communities affected, have organized a truly grass-roots organization. They have come out and said: "We want to have a say. We will not allow the government to run roughshod over our democratic rights." They have organized and put forward their position clearly and influenced the course of events substantially.

I'm also proud that we made it very clear to this government, to the government House leader, that there were three basic things that the government must do. The first one was to change the position taken by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, change the position that was taken by the Premier, that the referenda were irrelevant and didn't matter and were a waste of money, that the government would pass the legislation before the referenda were held. The government has backed down on that. The government has now said there will be hearings and that the legislation will not be passed into law, will not pass third reading until after the referenda. Our stall, which we instituted in this House by ringing



bells, by bringing forward points of order and motions, worked to that extent. I'm proud of our role in that. That doesn't mean this government then has to introduce this kind of legislation and prohibit a clear and full debate on second reading.

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I think a couple of other things should be made clear in this debate. We now have a commitment that the third reading will not take place until after the referendum so that the people of Metropolitan Toronto will have the opportunity to express their democratic opinion on this legislation, to try and prevent the government from decimating the communities that make up Metropolitan Toronto.

We also have a commitment from this government even in this motion that they are going to have more public hearings than the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing indicated they were willing to have. But in the so-called negotiations among the House leaders I want to make one thing clear. Even though the government said publicly that eventually, because of the pressure of the people outside, there would be hearings that would lead through February and into March, they actually only offered us nine days of hearings, nine days to hear the presentations of over 600 individuals and groups who have indicated that they want to make presentations. That was completely inadequate. The government House leader never offered more than nine days until this motion was introduced in the House.

We also said, though, that not only must there be sufficient time to hear everyone, and I don't think what is proposed in this motion in any way gives sufficient time for all those groups and individuals to make presentations, but the committee must also travel. There must be hearings here at Queen's Park, but there also must be hearings in each of the cities affected by this megacity legislation. I expect the government to adhere to that. I expect the government to agree. I expect that the government members on the committee will agree to travel and will give people in Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough, all across Metropolitan Toronto the opportunity to go to their own city hall and appear before the committee and make their position clear. Then I expect that the government will listen.

If there is overwhelming opposition to this legislation, democracy then demands that the government withdraw the legislation. If there are suggestions of changes, democracy demands that the government move amendments and that those amendments be dealt with in a proper way, not simply deemed to have been dealt with at the end of one day of clause-by-clause hearings or at the end of committee of the whole deliberations for one hour in this House. This is very serious, this is a very important change that is being proposed that is going to have ramifications for generations of people who live in this city and in the environs, all the communities around Metropolitan Toronto.

The people who make presentations must not be given short shrift by the government. They must be listened to, there must be sufficient time and that's why we are going to oppose this motion. We are going to oppose it. We'll be voting against it and we will do everything in our

power to ensure that this legislation does not pass as is presented by this government in this House, because it is bad legislation. That is why we stalled it, that is why we oppose it and that's why we will continue to oppose it and attempt to defeat it.

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** I'm delighted indeed to speak on this time allocation motion that is before us to be debated by this assembly, a motion that attempts to curtail very serious debate on a very serious subject. I might add that when I was thinking about what I might say today, there have been those who have suggested that the cries of opposition have used inflamed rhetoric to rail against plans for a megacity on the part of this government, and that somehow this was nothing more than bombast, bluster on the part of the opposition, using obstructionism only for the sake of opposition, that we oppose what this government is doing not because we fundamentally disagree, but that we are being obstructionists because we are in opposition and by definition therefore the opposition must oppose.

I say that is incorrect. There is nothing truthful about that. In fact, we are adamantly opposed to this legislation. We are adamantly opposed to a government that every time it runs into a flurry of opposition, a cacophony of voices that have been raised against what they intend to do as being anti-democratic, ill-conceived measures that simply do not square with the wishes of the public at large, this government says: "We know better. We know what the public wants. We know they want a megacity. We know municipalities want to be dumped on. We know seniors want to be chased from their homes. We know the disabled won't mind all of these additional burdens. We know the property taxpayers of this province can handle more, can pay for more and receive less in the end." Because that's what this government is offering to the people of this province, and nothing short of that.

Yes, we do apply rhetoric in this case because, I've got to tell you, I feel strongly about this. I feel that what this government is doing is destroying not only our cities, but a way of life, the kind of Ontario I grew up in, the kind of Ontario I've come to love, the kind of Ontario I want my children to grow up in. That's what's at stake here. That's what this government is putting in jeopardy. There is a great deal to be concerned about, there is a great deal to consider in these measures.

Why have we asked for this government to consider these requests for timely hearings, for hearings that are meaningful, that are going to give enough people enough time to have their say? Because nothing short of Ontario and the way we know it is at stake. That's what we're debating, that's what we're fighting for, and this time allocation motion attempts to shut down those voices who would dare oppose the government.

In all of this debate, you see the chorus of voices increasing. Mayor after mayor, whether they're in Metro Toronto or part of the GTA, mayors from right across this city, groups such as the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, the Metro board of trade, on and on the list grows each and every day. That is why we in our party, the Liberal Party of Ontario, have decided to hold our own hearings, because we want to give people an opportunity to have a say.



That is the very thing this government does not want. It does not want to hear those voices in opposition to its plans. It does not want to hear those criticisms, because it runs counter to what they believe in. They've even deemed the time we are taking to democratically debate matters of such grave importance to this province as a waste of taxpayers' time and money because it doesn't conform to their tight schedule to get everything rammed through this Legislature.

We've seen this behaviour before. It's not the first time. Bill 26 was visited upon us in this chamber just over a year ago. We had a major debate around whether this government was doing the right thing. It was anti-democratic at that time. It was certainly not within the spirit of democracy of this Legislative Assembly. They attempted to ram down our throats a piece of legislation which was ill-considered. What's the rush? When we've arrived at a point in time in our democracy when to debate, to have rational, reasoned, objective debate is considered a waste of taxpayers' money, that's a sad day for democracy in Ontario.

1630

It's inconceivable that there would be such a government in office today in our great democracy that would not uphold the right of individuals of minorities — yes, in the minority, perhaps, at this point in time to this government's plans, but I tell you it's changing as we speak, it's changing each and every day. There are more and more people who are opposed to this government because they're really beginning to see the true face of the revolution. They're really beginning to see that this revolution has gone beyond being a mere revolution at this point in time; they've actually declared war on municipalities, war on a way of life, war on our quality of life because they see it as a waste of taxpayers' money.

They can't even prove that. That's the startling thing. They talk about amalgamation being the path to salvation, to greater efficiencies, that this will rectify our reckless fiscal imbalance. So what do they do? They dump on municipalities all of these additional burdens. They say, "You take this, you take that and we'll take something back." Does it all add up and does it equal out? No, it doesn't. We're seeing it day after day. We're proving it to this government in this chamber. It doesn't add up.

What you're trying to get away with is passing off costs on to municipalities and not giving them the tools to deal with this. What you're trying to get away with is a \$1-billion shortfall in the swap. You're shortchanging municipalities. You're shortchanging the people of this province. You are in fact imposing a huge burden on the property taxpayers of this province.

What do we have at the end of the day, with this time allocation motion which calls on us to end debate about the most fundamental question facing our province? I use this inflamed rhetoric, I admit, because I feel that way. It's the end of a way of life. If this government really was courageous, it might say to the people of this province: "We do want to end that way of life and it will cost you more, and you will have to pay, and the ability to pay for services that we now consider important enough to fund through a pooling of our income taxes will no longer be there to help those most in need."

That will very clearly deteriorate our way of life, our quality of life, which by the way helps us be the great and efficient and viable economy that we are. Yes, we've had some problems, yes, there are some fiscal imbalances to be dealt with, but that doesn't mean you can get away with downloading and dumping on to municipalities. We simply won't accept it. We simply will fight you every step of the way and we will do our utmost to make sure that the people of this province truly understand what you're selling them, and that what you're selling them is a —

**Interjection:** It's a bill of goods.

**Mr Cordiano:** What you're selling them is pretty rotten. It's a rotten deal for them. It's shortchanging the taxpayers of this province. It's completely unacceptable. What you're selling them as well is an end to a way of life which has become the envy of the world. Every single commentator, observer, of Metropolitan Toronto has suggested that it is the best city not only in North America but right across the entire globe, with the best quality of life, that ensures its citizens receive the kind of support they need, which then in turn enables us to attract additional investment and to have the kind of thriving economy we're looking for, not at the lowest end, the lowest common denominator, but at the highest end, ensuring that we do have a viable economy, that the industrial sector is thriving — commentator after commentator.

Need I mention the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Toronto, which suggested that if this government took the path that it's taking, it would be destructive to Metro Toronto, it would have the opposite effect of what was intended?

One could say that this government didn't know what it was doing. We could say that. I happen to believe this government knew full well what it was doing when it attempted this ill-considered, reckless policy of dumping on to municipalities; that it's part of the grand scheme of things; that they needed to do this in order to have the ability to come up with the dollars necessary for a 30% tax cut. They couldn't find it with just simply slashing education, which they did in the first round, or slashing health care, which they did in the first round. There wasn't enough there. They went back to the drawing board and said:

"Where are we going to find this money? Well, here's a pool of funds that hasn't been tapped. There are property taxpayers out there who certainly can afford to pay more. After all, they're sitting on homes, on real estate that's worth something. Let's attack that. Let's make sure that municipalities take on the burden for some of these costs and let's use the property tax base to fund these essential services: social services, long-term care for seniors, social housing, welfare."

What more ludicrous a plan could you come up with than to fund those essential services, social services, on the property tax base? Completely ill-considered; as I say, all of the experts suggest to this government that it is making a huge mistake. Some have said it's going to be irreversible if they go down this path. I happen to believe that may not be the case. I'm an optimist at heart and I happen to believe we could reverse that decision made by this government some time down the road.



I know there will be a next government of a different stripe, because this government is showing that it cannot possibly manage the affairs of this province in a way that's conducive to economic growth, that will maintain quality of life, that will keep the kind of Ontario we've all come to love and appreciate. They will have savaged Ontario. They will have risked all of that for an ill-considered tax cut, an income tax cut which is totally ludicrous, at a time when we have a deficit, at a time when they are gutting services that are essential and that help us to attract investment and improve our economy. They are undermining very severely our ability to compete, our ability to have a viable economy. That's what's at stake.

I know that every single Ontarian, if they have the time to look at what this government is really doing, if they have the time to hear the real story about what's behind the government's initiatives, would find that they want no part of it, that it's just the wrong approach. Every single Ontarian would suggest to this government in no uncertain terms, "Go back to the drawing board; don't go down this road." It's reckless, it's ill-considered, it's absolutely ludicrous. It's going to destroy community after community and there won't be a whole lot left. In a short period of time they will have committed one of the worst errors in our history. I regret that and I hope they regret that.

1640

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Further debate? The Chair recognizes the member for Riverdale. *Applause.*

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** Thank you, member for Cochrane North.

I'm happy to stand and explain to people why I'm not supporting the motion before us today. We are witnessing a shocking and despicable attack on Metro Toronto and democracy in Metro. What this government is doing to my community of Riverdale and communities all across Metro Toronto is shocking and is despicable.

I can tell the members of the government here today that there is a grass-roots movement out there that is growing daily, despite the bogus study that this government did in desperation because there was no credible study, no public consultation anywhere that it could find or that it did itself that actually recommended that it do what it did. So what did they do? They went out and commissioned a bogus, very quick KPMG study. Those consultants weren't even allowed to talk to the people providing the very services which they were supposedly studying and give the results to the government.

I am proud that our caucus was able to participate in this House in holding up this despicable, anti-democratic bill. Despite the grins on the faces of the backbenchers over there and despite the fact that the member for Scarborough East stands up — and methinks he doth protest too much — they know what's going on out there. They know that despite at least the editorial sections of all three of the Toronto daily newspapers and the Harris government's attempts at advertising to try to convince people of the facts that aren't proven, that their taxes will actually go down with this scheme — and everybody wants to hear that their taxes will go down. That's a simple message; it certainly helped get them elected.

What they're not telling the people and what absolutely everybody, including the chamber of commerce, including David Crombie, including lots of people who at the very beginning supported amalgamation but unfortunately at the time did not see the connection between amalgamating all of the smaller municipalities and the downloading that followed in the mega-week announcements — unfortunately, the chamber of commerce in its press conference talked about — I read John Barber's article in the *Globe and Mail* and was not surprised, but disappointed, that he was unable to get answers at that press conference from the board of trade on the issue of amalgamation and the very connection between the two.

Because that's just it; there is a connection. My constituents are going to be stuck with a very big property bill at the end of the day, and they are not fooled by all this underhanded, self-serving government advertising that they've been seeing lately, some of which has been condemned by the Speaker, some of which has been condemned by all of us in here because of the kind of self-serving propaganda it is. I can tell you that the people in my riding of Riverdale are not being fooled by this and will not be fooled by this.

The local BIAs, the business improvement areas; the Chinese chamber of commerce, which oversees the coordination of the small businesses in Chinatown in my area; community groups from all political stripes and all interests have come together to fight this government on this despicable bill.

I see the member for York East is here. The people from York East are organizing right under his very nose and they're disappointed that the member representing them in this House is not representing them, that he's going out and spewing the government line on this.

The government has absolutely no proof, on the contrary — Mike Harris broke a fundamental promise to the people of Metro Toronto because he said very clearly, and so did some of the members in this House, that if elected they would not get rid of local government. Indeed they said they would do the opposite, that they would get rid of the Metro level and keep local government. That is a major promise which has been fundamentally broken. They broke the faith of the residents, the constituents in my riding and all across Toronto and more and more people are realizing that.

The people of Riverdale are organizing daily, as are people all over this city, including Scarborough, including York East, including Etobicoke. They are coming out in droves and daily are learning more and more about what this really means to them despite the government propaganda, as I mentioned, the underhanded kind of propaganda that we're seeing out there on a daily basis, the onslaught.

People are not being fooled by this stuff. Now the government is trying to backtrack on the downloading of welfare and trying to find a way to deal with that. Interestingly enough this is even more entanglement. They said they were trying to disentangle. This kind of downloading of welfare is still cost-shared. They've said that municipalities have to pay more of the share.

Social housing: We know what kind of shape a lot of the housing is in within Metro Toronto and the huge



costs involved in fixing up that housing. Cooperative housing: Everybody who lives in government or cooperative housing is worried sick and has been since this government first started to talk about selling it off. Municipal governments aren't going to be able to afford to keep up that housing. What are people to do? They're going to be out on the street.

Long-term care, health services, all kinds of services, as many others have said before me, leaving aside the financial implications, that morally belong to a larger level of government where there is a more progressive form of income tax so those with more pay more, that is what progressive, fair tax is all about. This government is literally going to have seniors and low-income people eventually kicked out of their housing because they're not going to be able to afford their municipal bills, their property tax bills.

People know what's going on. I am proud that with my colleagues I have been able to fight in this House, and we will continue that fight with the citizens of Metro Toronto, and without them — John Sewell, his group; the other kinds of organization around and at the city halls across Metro — this government probably would have rammed this despicable bill through by now. It's because of the groundswell and the dedication of these people to their way of life, to preserve their communities, that the fight is on.

Already the government has backed down, and that was the purpose of the tactics we used in this House. Unless the government House leader gives us more of an opportunity on third reading, there's going to be a lot more trouble, I can assure you of that. I for one am not going to sit here in my seat and allow this government on third reading to ram through a bill that is going to destroy my community, a community I've worked in as a single mom, as a volunteer, as a community activist, and then on to city hall, where as citizens we fought incineration on a local level. The member for St Catharines will remember that. He was the Minister of the Environment then — a big fight but we won it. All the kinds of fights we have fought in Riverdale and indeed people have fought in East York and the Beaches — but the member from the Beaches will be speaking about the Beaches very soon, I promise. I think she's trying to remind me that my time is almost up.

1650

We will continue this fight because this is one of the most basic, fundamental kinds of fights that we have seen in this province. We know that our communities that we worked hard to build, from all walks of life, in many different ways, will be lost, perhaps not forever but for a long, long time.

We are going to see urban decay, we are going to see urban sprawl, we are going to see a mayor who has to raise at least \$1 million to even get elected. Where is that money going to come from? I can tell you where it's going to come from: We're going to go back to the bad old days when the developers footed the bill. When I ran for city council, people were fed up even then with the way developers controlled things and a lot of the pro developer councillors were thrown out. I could afford, a

mayor could afford, to run at that time in a smaller urban centre. No mayoral candidate is going to be able to do that any more. We're giving our communities back to the developers. There is no choice. That is what's happening here.

The downloading is going to bankrupt us. There will be urban decay. The centre of our city will be hollowed out. This is not rhetoric. Everybody with any credible study everywhere has said the same thing — and this government thinks they know it all. The Minister of Municipal Affairs stands up on a daily basis and says, "Well, I know. Everybody else is wrong. I know the answer to all these questions," but he can't back it up with any studies.

**Mr Bradley:** Every study says the opposite.

**Ms Churley:** Absolutely. That's why they did the bogus study, so they'd have one thing to point to. The people of Toronto and the people in Metro Toronto are not going to put up with this. I believe that at the end of the day these people over there who think it's a joke now are going to have to sit down and listen, because they ain't seen nothing yet in terms of the groundswell of the citizens movement that's growing daily.

I am not going to support this bill. I am not going to support this motion today. They like to crow about the fact that the NDP and the Liberals brought in time allocation. I will tell those members something: Our government never, ever brought in such an undemocratic and wide-reaching piece of legislation and then tried to ram it through, and never would. In fact, some say we consulted too much. I must admit I believe in some cases that's true.

This government does not believe in democracy. It just wants to ram it through so that they can get the \$5 billion for their tax cut. We're not fooled. We know what you're trying to do here and it ain't going to work. We will see to that.

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** It is of course pursuant to a motion, an embarrassing motion, by this government to hide the facts of its Bill 103, an embarrassing motion by this government to invoke closure following consequently on the act of contempt performed by the minister here, recognized by the Speaker in this House, that this government could not bring itself to agree with, to not even censure, to show respect for the Speaker and for this House, that this government found it necessary to undermine the ability of this Legislature to discuss this legislation by putting out a pamphlet that did not fairly describe the process that was under way.

This is our last opportunity here today to put from this House out to the citizens of Metropolitan Toronto — indeed I believe this is starting to be an issue that interests those around the province as they understand now that the megacity in Metropolitan Toronto means the mega-dumping that's taking place across the province, that this is just one vehicle that's been set up by this government.

It's a sad day for democracy when the ability of the opposition to try and create longer hearings so that people who want to be heard on this issue can be heard, the efforts by the opposition to try and get hearings taken out



to these city halls — the government is afraid to take the hearings out to the exact places they're trying to demolish, trying to avoid the citizens, in the same way they put out a piece of literature that didn't tell the whole story on the megacity, a government abusing its powers in terms of trying to get the story across.

There's good reason, as we've learned subsequently, for this government to not deal with this in a straightforward fashion, because this government is afraid of the public learning about what the real implications are, and certainly the profoundly undemocratic nature is one part of it. It's something that we haven't seen in this province before. It's a pattern now with this government, since Bill 26, to be able to put together pieces of legislation that are not really pieces of legislation at all.

What the public needs to know is that Bill 103, the bill that we're invoking closure on, that this government says doesn't need discussion, is a hollow, empty bill. It contains less than three pages of details of what the largest metropolitan centre in the country would look like and 24 pages on the trusteeship, the takeover of the municipalities of Metropolitan Toronto, on what that would look like, on how this government would put into place the most undemocratic instrument. In fact, it believes it already has as of December 17. All six municipalities in the Metro government in this region have been taken over by the provincial government, restricted in their movements. The people who elected municipal politicians have had that snatched away from them by this government, just as we in this House are losing our right to debate this issue because this government would not agree at an early point to hearings that would accommodate everyone, to the ability of citizens to be heard in their own cities, while they still exist, on what this government is planning to do.

I think that this government is starting to show itself in no uncertain terms, that profoundly undemocratic action is the norm, not the exception, that when they put in place trustees and a transition team, they not only are denying the people who have been elected in those cities to represent their voters; they're also denying the people in this House. We see some of the members opposite who should take an interest in that, who should want to be heard on this particular issue, who will not get a say in the shape of the new megacity because it's not in this bill. The megacity is not described in this bill.

Instead, all we know is there will be an elected mayor, there will be 44 people who get elected at some point following January next year — the wards will be set by the minister, in which I think we can expect the most skilful case of gerrymandering since Tammany Hall — and then there will be trustees and a setup transition team, unelected people, who will fill in all the rest of the details. So people who think this is a bill that they'd like to support on the general idea of consolidation in Metropolitan Toronto need to think again. The recommendation that has to be followed is that this is a bad bill even for somebody who might be interested in the virtues of consolidation, because this bill tells you nothing. This bill is a blank cheque for Al Leach to take apart all the positive attributes of Metropolitan Toronto.

We know because of this bill that this government does not have a sincere interest in what Metropolitan Toronto looks like, because it won't tell us. It won't give us any of the details in this bill. Instead, there's only one reason that rings clear, one single reason why this government is bothering to tamper with one of the most successful cities in North America in such a backhanded fashion. They're doing this simply because they need to take the money out of this region for the tax cut. It's very, very clear that residents in my city, the city of York, the residents of York South, everywhere in Metropolitan Toronto, will pay significantly higher taxes: as the mayor of my municipality reported to the Liberal task force this morning, some 21% increase when all the measures are factored in, 10% from the mega-dumping alone, the dumping now of welfare, of long-term care, of public health, of a whole host of things that used to be government responsibility, that used to be the things that a provincial government stood up for because they thought their citizens needed their health and wellbeing provided for. This government has decided that they're no longer important, to dump them instead on the municipalities in a completely unfair swap, a completely unfair trade for the money they're taking off for education.

The extra costs across the province have been identified by the city of North York and others as exceeding \$1 billion, so that's \$1 billion that's being grabbed by this government to use for its tax cut. One of the by-products of that is the elimination of the governments of Metropolitan Toronto, the extra burden of which has been identified by the board of trade, not an enemy in the past of this particular government, as at least \$450 per resident and \$7,800 per business in new Tory taxes.

The new Tory property tax is what's coming with the megacity. That doesn't even take fully into account the impact of AVA, which will inevitably, given the measures of this government, raise taxes for most of the people in Metropolitan Toronto.

1700

When we look at the very specious claim of this government that somehow its arrangements will save money, we find that they can't produce one single report that will demonstrate that. Pardon me, there is one report that was made up in haste three weeks before the announcements of a megacity, released the day after, when the government said it was still seeking opinions. This report says that either we'll save \$700 million or we'll lose money. The author of that report, Ron Kikel from KPMG, at least had the good taste to say at the presentation that there is no amalgamation that's ever happened anywhere in North America, of creating these massive, large entities, that actually has saved money, not a single one. Yet the members opposite sit on the precipice of closing debate on this important measure, which could be ruinous to the largest city in Ontario.

We have here a tax grab of the first order. We have at risk the quality of life for residents of Metropolitan Toronto. What we have here is an avaricious government, one that has shown no interest in the general wellbeing of the citizens of this particular part of the province, and it's something that people everywhere in the province have to take note of, when a government uses this kind of clout.



Some parts of the province, like Hamilton, had a year, had a constituent assembly, had a chance to get some discussion happening. This government won't even concede three months to the largest and most complex municipal arrangement in the province. Instead it tries to ask for a blank cheque, no details about what it would do. Certainly the people of Metropolitan Toronto have been able to fill in that blank themselves. They know that cheque is a negative for them and a big positive for the government to transfer to people, particularly for people who are better off. Half the tax cut is going to people making \$90,000 a year or more. There's no stimulus to the economy. Thousands of jobs will be lost as a consequence of this megacity, just as Metro has already been made to pay disproportionately for the cutbacks that this government is taking.

We know that this community has been successful and we don't take that for granted. We won't stand for a government taking that away in such an arbitrary fashion. In all of North America there are only three cities that have two million people or more, and this government, out of its financial whimsy because its numbers didn't add up, is going to create another one. Two of those cities, New York and Los Angeles, have within them movements to pull themselves apart because they're not working. The third one, Chicago, which is the model for this government, has lost a million people in the last 20 years because of the problems it has had sustaining a livable community. Those are the models for this government. Instead we have to make sure the people out there understand that the things that matter to them, the things that make the quality of life in the city as high as it is, are the things that need to be maintained.

On local government, what will happen is that local issues like permit parking and icy sidewalks and noise complaints and dogs running at large and those things will not be dealt with by the remoteness of one representative for every 53,000 people — 53,000 people get one local representative to deal with all municipal concerns, because all the government does in its bill is throw everything into a blender at the end of the year and say, "That's the megacity." Everything that exists right now is thrown in there for that person to deal with. That is 10 times more people who have to be represented than in Mike Harris's home town of North Bay, where there's a representative for every 5,300 people.

This is being done without one single study at any time to say that this is the route that should happen for Metropolitan Toronto. We've heard the minister opposite on different occasions refer to years of studies. None of them point in this particular direction. This is a megamess that this government wants to create, to create enough confusion to silence some voices of elected members, to shut down Metropolitan Toronto so it can take the tax money out of here. It's the only thing this government seems to care about.

When we look at the kinds of things that the Golden report, and very significantly — it wasn't so significant at the time, but I think now we see the flip-flop of this government, its Trimmer task force that a number of members of the sitting government sat on before the

election, saying, "We want to retain the six local municipalities." When it's shown that they can't do that and take the money out of Metro and raise property taxes to be able to pay for their provincial tax cut, now they want to do the opposite: Now they want to eliminate those local levels of government that can be most responsive to people and create the kind of mess they have in mind for this area.

The singular thing that has to be kept in mind when people recognize the type of action this government is contemplating is that it doesn't address the biggest problem that exists in Metropolitan Toronto.

In my riding of York South we face an unequal battle with the people who live in the Toronto 905 who have greenfield sites, a differential tax base, provincial property grants, and an ability to bring business there on unfair terms with what exists within the city of York. We've got 40 undeveloped acres. We've got brownfield sites that used to house thriving industries.

Rather than having a responsible provincial government that recognizes the importance of making cities like the city of York work, we've got a compounding of disadvantage. We've got the loading of a tax base, as the chamber of commerce says, a \$1,700 increase in taxes for local businesses. Kodak in my riding, identified by our mayor today, stands to pay another \$650,000 in taxes. That is a company we've had to struggle to keep in Metropolitan Toronto. Hundreds and hundreds of jobs for here are threatened certainly by the reckless measures of this government.

It has been itemized elsewhere that this was done on the back of a napkin. We all have to hang our heads in sorrow to think that this is the kind of thing it has come to for the largest metropolitan area, that this government can't even dole out a certain amount of respect for the citizens who live here.

The thing we have to be mindful of is that this government makes it sound, and has made it sound with its illegal document that it put out to households, as if this is over, as if this somehow can't be fought. Well, the opposite is true. It has just begun. The government is trying to stack the deck in every way it can. It has limited the amount of hearings, it is closing down the speaking in this House and it will try to shut down the opposition in about half an hour from now, but it won't be shut down. There are citizens all across the province who are interested in this, and particularly in the city of York and in the different cities that make up Metropolitan Toronto. They will be heard.

The government members opposite should take notice that people realize that people at least want to have their say. They want to be able to have some impact on the community they live in, the same grace that has been extended to a number of other communities across the province and is being taken away from them. They recognize that not only is this profoundly undemocratic, that it's raising their taxes, that the quality of life they've come to treasure here has no place in the priorities of this government, that you're prepared to wreck some of the most complicated communities in terms of the cultures we're able to make thrive here, the ability we have for



different people to get along, the ability we have to be able to maintain a basic quality of life at least for many of the people, but instead this government wants to turn that upside down and all in the name of taking away the dollars.

When we look at the kinds of things this government has in mind, we know there is not an effort to even understand what that complex municipal area needs. We know that people out there want to hear from this government on the details of its plan. The government has chosen not to do that. This government didn't run for this as part of its election platform; it's only made this up on the go as it has come out of it.

As people start to realize that they've now created a situation where we have to pay in our local area for long-term care, which is expected to double in the next eight years, that we have to pay for welfare out of the property tax, that we're going to have to pay for public health, for social housing, that this is an abandonment of Metropolitan Toronto, we will see the kind of result they had in Chicago where a million people left, if this government is allowed to get away with it.

That "if" is growing bigger every day. It's made bigger by this government's measures here today in cutting off debate. It will be made bigger by the squeezing of the hearings into small 25-seat capacity rooms here at Queen's Park rather than out to the city halls. That "if" will be made bigger by the silence of the Tory members opposite not speaking to the concerns of their constituents. That "if" will be made bigger simply because this proposal is fundamentally flawed and fundamentally wrong.

**Ms Lankin:** In the limited amount of time I have today there are three areas I would like to touch on.

First, I would like to talk about what the real problems are and the problems we have looked at and the solutions that have been proposed by many, and how that is very different than the bill, Bill 103, that the government has brought forward with respect to amalgamation of cities within Metro.

Second, I'd like to talk about the response we're starting to hear out there in our neighbourhoods, how people view this bill, how they view the government's actions, what their concerns are and the issues they've raised in the many public meetings that I and my colleagues have been attending.

Third, I'd like to talk about the process the government has employed with respect to this bill and how we find ourselves here today facing a time allocation motion which will close down debate on this, which will set out the number of days of public hearings — an inadequate number of days of public hearings — and which will force the amendment process through the House in very short order and limit third reading debate to one day.

1710

Starting with the problems that exist, in following the previous speaker, you heard him raise examples of American cities. He specifically talked about Chicago, New York and Los Angeles. If you cast your mind back to some of the debate that has taken place within Metro Toronto and within the greater Toronto area over the last five to six years, people were becoming concerned about

a growing phenomenon of businesses relocating outside of the downtown core of the city of Toronto and outside of Metropolitan Toronto to the 905 belt, as it's called, those communities of the Durhams and the Mississaugas and the Yorks around Metropolitan Toronto.

There was a growing concern about a deindustrialization, a loss of jobs, an inability of the tax base to maintain the many services that are required in a large urban area and about the fact that many of the people who lived in the 905 belt actually benefited from many of those services — used the transit system, for example, wanted to hook into the sewer systems that came down and where the sewage was processed through, like, in my riding, the Ashbridges Bay sewage treatment plant — and a growing inequity in terms of taxation issues and in terms of issues of economic development.

Many people looked at those problems. I have to tell you that the problems were always identified as problems of the economic region. That economic region has never been defined as Metropolitan Toronto, because of course it's not; it's the greater Toronto area. It includes the Mississaugas; it includes the Durhams.

As people looked at that problem, there was a growing concern about what would happen, that we would start to mirror some of those US cities and that what has been referred to as the doughnut phenomenon would occur, that being the ring around having relative prosperity, the suburbs, the outer communities, having relative prosperity, and growing poverty in the inner city, fewer jobs in the inner city, an insufficient tax base to maintain and repair the roads, the buildings and the infrastructure, so a crumbling infrastructure which would propel more people to move out of the inner city who wanted to pursue a quality of life and who had the economic means to pursue a better quality of life, and that it would start to accelerate. You would have what people have referred to as the doughnut phenomenon.

There has been much written on it. There has been much written about those large US cities where this has occurred and how they've begun to recognize the importance of reversing the trend to mass centralization and have started to look at the re-creation of smaller governance units, of smaller local governments that are more closely related to the neighbourhoods, where there is direct elected representation and accountability that cares about neighbourhoods and neighbourhood issues and that thinks about the impact of planning decisions on neighbourhoods.

They're starting to go in the other direction, and yet this government — it's beyond me to understand how it came to this conclusion, because all of the people who have looked at the problem here in the greater Toronto area have said the problems that need to be addressed are economic development in the greater Toronto area; our planning across the greater Toronto area, things like roads and highways and water and sewer infrastructure, to promote development across the greater Toronto area; and coordination of transportation across the greater Toronto area. This is a definition of the problem, and those are the solutions people looked to.

From those studies, people started to say, "Look, we need to have some kind of coordination across the greater



Toronto area." Maybe that means a GTA coordinating body; maybe it means moving to an elected government at that level. These are some methods, some models, that we need to explore. I have to tell you that all of the reports, all of the studies, have headed in that direction, whether it be the Trimmer report, which was a task force of Mike Harris when he was in the Conservative Party in opposition; whether it be the previous government's sponsored Golden task force, which was an extensive study, although when this government came to power they cut their time and cut the resources and shortened that process — I think that was a mistake, but even at that it's a very substantive report with a lot of research based on wide consultation which comes to the same conclusion: that you need the local governments and you need coordination at the GTA level — or whether it be the Crombie Who Does What panel; or whether it be reports that in the past have looked at how services should be shared and — the buzzword is "disentanglement" — who should do what; whether it be the provincial-municipal review of social assistance which took place in late 1970s and early 1980s.

There have been several of these reviews. None of them has suggested the solution that this government has come to: the complete eradication of local governments and the downloading of provincial services, social services on to the property tax base. This is absolutely stunning and incredible that the government has come to this solution. I keep saying if the GTA is the problem, how can Metro government be the solution? It's beyond me to understand.

If you look at how the government came to this conclusion, you'll recall that over the course of the early months of last year the Golden task force reported, and then the government set its own task force to study that and it came back with some other recommendations. Through all of that everyone was looking at what form of governance should occur at the GTA level. Should that mean a full level of regional government and should we eliminate the other regional governments, the Durhams and other regional governments and Metro? Should those levels be eliminated, and you'll have your local municipalities, your cities and a GTA region? There were lots of critics of that solution too, but people were starting to grapple with how you effectively coordinate across the GTA area.

Then all of a sudden, in late August, early September, in the musings of the minister one day in a press scrum or some place, this idea gets floated out about, "Well, you know, maybe what we should look at is doing away with the six cities in Toronto and creating one amalgamated supercity, one megacity." People were amazed: "Where did this idea come from?"

There is nothing to substantiate this as a reasoned move. There were no reports or studies; there had been no public consultation that had suggested to people that this was an appropriate solution. The minister hadn't gone out and spoken with the people in Metropolitan Toronto and asked them what they thought about this idea. All of the discussion, all of the concentration had been focused on how to coordinate at the greater Toronto area level.

I think when the minister first made the suggestion few of us took it seriously. Perhaps that was a mistake in retrospect, because it appears that he was very serious and it appears from that time on the government had already made their minds up. Since then we have had a series of public relations moves to try and substantiate and defend what is, by any other standard or process or study or analysis that has been done, an attempt to defend the indefensible.

There's been much said by members of the government, and particularly here today by the government House leader and the member for Scarborough East. There's been much said about how they have to move this closure motion because they want to get this bill out for public hearings and how the opposition has been holding things up. They've been quite critical of us.

Well, I want people to take a look at how this has come about. People, I hope, will remember that from September, when we heard this first idea floated by the minister, to December, a period of less than four full months, we went from a zany idea to a government committed to doing this and moving ahead no matter what anyone had to say; a government that made it very clear that they thought the fact that cities were thinking of holding referenda was totally inappropriate and they wouldn't listen to any referendum results; in fact a government that in December and early January continued to tell us they were going to pass this bill through third and final reading by mid-February to the end of February, before the cities could hold their referendum on March 3; a bill being introduced in which this government says now it has all the answers, a bill which sets out no detail.

1720

If the citizens of the six cities in Metro Toronto want to have a sense of what their community will look like, what that governance will look like, how they will get local issues resolved, what kind of neighbourhood control or input there will be, what kind of accessibility they will have to bureaucracies and politicians to deal with their problems, they can't find out because the specifics are not in the bill.

The bill says: "We're going to do away with six cities and amalgamate them into one, and by the way, it will happen as of this date. Elections will be in November, and on January 1, 1998, that new megacity will have control and will be in place and all will be fine. If there are any details to work out, a trustee, a non-elected body, working with non-elected bureaucrats, is going to sort all of that out over time."

We can't answer the questions for the people, the citizens, the ratepayers in Metropolitan Toronto around all of these various issues and questions they have, because the government hasn't thought it through. Of course they haven't, because none of the study, none of the analysis that has been done supports the direction they're going. In fact as we have pointed out on many occasions, experience in virtually every other jurisdiction indicates that this is absolutely wrongheaded and this is the wrong way to go.

Large cities of over two million people don't save money in the way the government proposes this will. The



experience has been the contrary. That, combined with the downloading of services and costs on to the property tax base, will accelerate, in everyone's estimation, including many allies of this government — the banks, the board of trade and others — what I referred to earlier as that doughnut phenomenon. It will accelerate businesses fleeing the cities of Metro Toronto to the outlying regions. It will accelerate the decay of the infrastructure of the city because the tax base will be so stressed there won't be the resources there for the capital expenditures to keep the infrastructure modern. It will accelerate, therefore, the fleeing of residential property owners out into the regions.

You end up with an unlivable city, a place where there are office towers, where people come to work only and then return to the suburbs; a place where the streets aren't safe at night; a place where the people who live in poverty do not have the resources within the city to provide services and no longer have a provincial government that is interested in providing those services either — an unlivable city. That's not in the tradition of Canadian cities; it's certainly not in the tradition of Ontario cities; and it's not in the tradition of the cities of Metro.

If I may, I just want to reassure people to a certain degree that their voices are important and they can have an effect, even on this government, even on a government that is so bullheaded in its approach that it's like a steamroller coming down the road. Sometimes it feels like you can't stop them, that you can't have any impact. I think some people perhaps feel: "What's the sense? Let's just give up and wait out this government." We can't afford just to wait out this government's term because the damage it will do is too significant. We must raise our voices and we must make ourselves heard. It is possible to have an effect.

I just want to give you a couple of examples of that, because this government is actually moderating and changing its position, and I believe it's as a result of that grass-roots uprising of citizen concern, of the way in which that's being expressed and of the very good, cooperative relationship between those groups and organizations and my colleagues and I and members of the opposition who have been fighting that battle in here, inside this Legislative Assembly.

May I point out to you again that the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing made it very clear that this bill was going to go through and it was going to go through fast; that they meant business, they weren't going to be slowed down by anything and it would be passed before these cities held their referendums. The minister stood in the House: February, that was his goal. It was going to be passed in February.

Certainly that provoked outrage here among my colleagues in the New Democratic benches, and it produced outrage in the public. People remembered the Bill 26 experience, people remembered that anti-democratic approach of this government with the omnibus legislation and the way in which they attempted to ram that through, how the opposition parties had to work together and had to hold an overnight sit-in in this Legislature to prevent them from ramming that through

without full public hearings. Even at that, we didn't get significantly enough public hearings, but we fought and we got some.

So here, we start to have discussions with the government about public hearings because they're saying they're going to ram this through and they're going to get it done before the referendum. We look at that and that means there will be very little time for public hearings. We make the point that it's not satisfactory and that the citizens have a right to be outraged that they're not going to be heard by this government.

You will recall that before December there was a small group of people who came together who took on the name Citizens for Local Democracy. They began meeting and at their first meetings there were 20, 25. It grew to 30 people. As we got past the Christmas season, the numbers that were starting to meet were 100, 150 and then 250. Then the next week it was 700 to 800 and then the following week it was 1,500. The phenomenal growth in activity of Citizens for Local Democracy is a central focal point for citizens coming together to organize to resist this government's legislation. That activity was amazing.

But it wasn't just Citizens for Local Democracy and just an activity in downtown Toronto. In North York, in Scarborough, in Etobicoke, in York, in East York similar kinds of meetings have happened. I was speaking with Mayor Prue from East York just this past weekend and their meetings in, relatively speaking, the small city of East York, have gone from a handful of organizers to 50 people; now they're up to 200, 250, 300 people coming out to those meetings. It's amazing.

In my own community of Beaches-Woodbine in east Toronto, on a Thursday night four people got together and said, "You know, we should be doing something locally as well." They called me the next day and invited me to come to a meeting on the Saturday, and at that meeting they had 10 or 12 people. They decided they were going to hold a larger meeting and invite anyone who may be interested, who might want to come and be part of this, and at that meeting, one week from the first meeting of four people, there were 65 people. That's grown every week as well.

This is happening right across Metro Toronto. This week, two nights ago, in the middle of a snowstorm — people here will remember the snowstorm we had — there was a meeting organized by parents in ward 10 of the city of Toronto, parents concerned about the government's cuts to education, what's happening in the education system and this mega-swap that's happening of the province taking control of education and yet cancelling the power of school trustees, the way in which they're going to try to grab that extra billion dollars out of the education system, much of it coming from Metro Toronto. Those parents were worried. They called a meeting. In the middle of a snowstorm there were over 350 people who came out to a ward meeting about this government's changes in the education system.

I think that has an impact and I think when you combine that with the array of voices that we have just heard this week come out in opposition to this govern-



ment's downloading of social services and the cost of social assistance on to the municipal property tax base — people like the board of trade, people like representatives of the banks, people like David Crombie, the very person they had head up the Who Does What study, who recommended absolutely against this, who said very clearly this week, "This is not disentanglement; this is more entangled than ever," who said very clearly this week that the one thing they were absolutely united on in that task force is that the province should not download the costs of these social services on to the property tax base, that would be absolutely the wrong way to go.

So what's happened? The government has started to shift again. A combination of all these things: We've seen the government go from, "We're going to ram this through, limited public hearings and it's going to be passed before the referendum," to now saying, "Okay, third reading will take place after the referendum." That's one thing our collective action won.

Secondly, in terms of the public hearings, no negotiations — I mean, a horrible process, the government House leader. But in the end, after offering nine days and after us continuing to stall the bill and say that wasn't sufficient because there at that point in time were between 600 and 700 people who had applied to speak to the committee and the ads hadn't even gone out to advertise the committee hearings yet — I suspect that there will be hundreds more — he went from nine days of hearings to 14 days of hearings. That's still not sufficient. We had asked for six weeks of public hearings. By the way, let me say that with six weeks they still could have met their deadline of passing this bill by March 31 or April 1, which is what they want.

1730

**Mr Bradley:** It's an artificial deadline anyway.

**Ms Lankin:** We don't believe that's a necessary deadline, but they could still have made that deadline. We wouldn't have been delaying anything. We just would have been ensuring enough time for those people who want to be heard to be heard. But they don't want to listen.

We've also made the case that we think that these hearings, some of them, at least once in each of the city halls, the committee should go out so that people can come out and participate not just in speaking to the committee but in being part of the process. They're resisting that. I had to laugh. The government House leader told me the reason they were resisting that is because if it's here in the Amethyst Room, it can be televised and people can see it all over, as if technology limits that to there. I just went to the broadcast services and said, "Tell me, can't you pick up the cable feeds out of those city halls and feed it back through here?" and they said, "Of course we can." A sham of an argument. It wasn't a real argument. They just want to limit it because in the Amethyst Room, of course, there are about 30, 40, maybe 50 people, I don't know — certainly not more than 50 — who could sit there and participate in watching the hearings. So it's just again limiting communications; it's damage control.

We'll continue to push for those hearings to go out to the city halls. We didn't get enough hearing dates but we

got more as a result of our actions in stalling this and working with those grass-roots voices out in the community, and we won a big concession from the government in terms of the vote on third reading not taking place until after the referendum. That's important.

But something else is important. The government is starting to change its position slightly on the issues of downloading. You will recall that the minister was very clear and the Premier was very clear: This is going ahead. This is going to happen as we say. This is going to be better for municipalities; they'll be delivering services. Property taxes are going to go down 10%. What a joke. It was a number out of nowhere. There was absolutely nothing to substantiate it. Municipality after municipality has added up the numbers of what's being downloaded and what's being taken off and they're showing how they're coming out losers. Of course, the provincial government is taking \$5.4 billion of education costs on to the provincial tax base and downloading \$6.4 billion on to the property tax base. And then they set up all these shams or these little funds that they say will make up the difference, \$1 billion here that will deal with any extraordinary problems that municipalities have. Let me tell you —

**Interjection:** No criteria.

**Ms Lankin:** My colleague says, "No criteria." No details; we don't know how it would work. But beyond that, \$700 million of that was already unconditional grants to municipalities which is scooped back. And then if you looked at what the budget projections were, if you look in last fall's economic statement, that unconditional grant pot was expected to grow to 900 and some odd million dollars, virtually \$1 billion. So that's not new money to deal with the problem. That's money that you've taken away from them that they were getting. It's less that they will get, that you haven't defined how they'll get access to and on what terms, but it doesn't make up the \$1-billion gap from the \$5.4 billion you're taking off and the \$6.4 billion you're putting down.

With all of the critical voices we have heard, the government started to say: "Okay, maybe we could pool welfare costs across the GTA municipalities. Maybe that would ease the problem for Metro Toronto a bit." Well, the antenna goes up out in the 905 belt and the GTA mayors go, "Wait a minute. We don't like this," and now they're opposed to it and the government's moving back a little bit more and saying: "Maybe there are other ways we can do this. The t's aren't crossed and the i's aren't dotted." Well, they sure were two weeks ago, one week ago. What an amazing change in positioning. I'm glad to hear that change in positioning. It's not enough. We're going to continue to fight, but let me tell you, it's an amazing change in positioning and it's because people's voices are being heard.

I said to the parents in my riding the other night: "This government discounts anyone who speaks out who has an organization or a name or something attached to them, because if you're critical, you're just a special interest group and they dismiss your concerns. You're just a special interest group and somehow this government is above all that, they know better and they're going to proceed on their own course."



Parents cannot be labelled a special interest group. As I said to them: "You are of all political stripes and many of no political stripe. You are of diverse interests, demographically diverse, geographically diverse. The thing you have in common is your passionate love for your kids, your care for what's happening to them in the school system, your demand that they get a decent education and your demand that governments be accountable in ensuring that happens." They have power. When citizens speak up, eventually even this government will have to listen.

We have participated in this House in means and measures to delay the government getting to this point of introducing its time allocation motion, and for a good reason. We did it with conviction. We did it because we wanted to give people time out in the community to get organized. We wanted to give people time to get information, for information to come to light, as we now see as municipalities are adding up the numbers or people are understanding the impact of the government's mega-week announcements. We wanted to demand a process from this government that allowed people the time to be heard, that allowed people to express their views through a democratic process like the referenda that are being held in the six cities and that allowed people to have the time to understand the implications of all the changes this government is going to proceed with.

I hope that the voices of people will be heard by this government. I fear this government will continue to bully its way through Ontario with this agenda, but I see some glimmers of light. I see some hope that with concerted effort and with loud voices and with intent purpose, people can force the government to be accountable, people can make the government listen to it, and in this case I hope the people will.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Further debate?

**Mr Bradley:** I can't say I'm delighted to be speaking on this motion, because it is a motion which is anti-democratic, one which limits the debate. Some would call it a guillotine. It severely restricts and limits debate on one of the most important pieces of legislation to come before this House. It is done under the provisions of the existing rules, which I opposed, by the way, when they were changed in the early part of the 1990s because I could see that a government that was determined to bully its way through legislation and through the province would utilize these rules for the wrong reasons. We have a government today imposing severe restrictions on the amount of debate that is going to take place on a very significant bill.

We've had only three speakers, that I can recall, one from each of the three parties, who have been able to speak on the principle or the substance of this piece of legislation, which abolishes six municipalities and combines them into one huge municipality in Metropolitan Toronto, one which is larger than many of the provinces here in Canada.

Those of us in the opposition have been extremely concerned about this legislation, and we have endeavoured through a variety of manoeuvres to persuade the

government that it should move more slowly, more carefully, and assess the consequences of government action. When I speak to people around this province, those who are supporters of this government, or those who while not being supporters might agree with the general direction in which the government is moving, or people who identify problems that they believe the government is trying to solve, even those people are saying the government is moving too quickly, too drastically and not taking into consideration the consequences of government actions. There's a pretty good consensus in this province that this is indeed the case.

We've been placing considerable pressure on the government over the last several days to gain three particular items — perhaps some more items — from the government in terms of procedure. One is that we wanted the government not to proceed with final consideration of this legislation until such time as the results of all the referenda that are held in the six municipalities, and they have different ways of conducting those consultations, were available to members of this chamber and to the people of Metropolitan Toronto.

1740

My leader, the member for Ottawa South, Mr McGuinty, asked the Premier a question on his first day back from the Asian excursion and extracted from him that particular promise. The Premier also said that day, people will recall, in answer to Mr McGuinty that he was prepared to acquiesce to all the requests of the opposition, so that everyone could be heard. Of course that commitment, as with the commitment of not closing hospitals in this province, such as Hotel Dieu in St Catharines and many others across the Niagara Peninsula, has been pushed aside.

The second thing we wanted was ample committee hearings, sufficient in number and convenience to allow all who wanted to make representations on this major piece of legislation to do so. We suggested there be several weeks of hearings. We suggested it would be reasonable — this was a third condition we were trying to place on it — that some of those hearings be held in either the municipal council chambers or a suitable alternative site that would accommodate a lot of people in each of those municipalities: in the city of Toronto itself, in Scarborough, in East York, in York, in North York and in Etobicoke. We felt that would allow people to have direct access, the kind of town hall meeting people look forward to these days.

While I guess the government hasn't entirely ruled that out, because I heard the Minister of Municipal Affairs in this House say he didn't mind that, we haven't heard from them lately on this matter and it appears they don't want those kinds of hearings now where people could have that kind of direct access. So that is what we were seeking.

We were also seeking more debate on second reading. There are a lot of members here who represent ridings within Metropolitan Toronto. They haven't had a chance to speak on the substance of this bill. I believe there should be several more days of second reading debate, or debate in principle. I believe on third reading we should



have at least a week of debate. That's four days in this Legislature where people, after hearing what has been said in the committee hearings and after considering the results of the referenda, could make further comments and could look upon any changes made in the legislation — withdrawal of the legislation of course would be the best — favourably.

That's why I'm going to move an amendment today. I'm going to ask that the pages receive some of these amendments and provide them for the other parties. It's an amendment that reads as follows:

That the amendment to the motion be amended by adding the following:

That the standing committee on general government shall be authorized to meet March 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, in order to travel to the affected municipalities and give proper consideration to the results of local referendums; and that the committee sit the number of days required to accommodate all requests for committee time; and that the committee be authorized to meet from 9 am to 12 pm and 1 pm to 5 pm and 7 pm to 10 pm; and that five additional sessional days be allotted for the second reading stage of the bill; and that four sessional days be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill.

I hope there would be some support on the government side for this. I suspect not. I'm a realistic enough person to know that there's unlikely to be some considerable support for that, but I think it's a reasonable amendment. It may not meet the wishes of everybody who exists in this world, who perhaps would like to have debate forever. I know that's not realistic. But the amendment to the amendment I have put today I think does meet some of the concerns people have had about the amount of time provided for consideration of this bill.

It seems to me the government has an onus on it to prove its case in megacity. It has not proved that case. It has not proved to the members of this Legislature or to anyone else that one huge city is going to be superior to the six municipalities which exist today. Many of those municipalities have talked about changes where they can delineate who is specifically responsible for one area and who is not responsible. I think that is a matter of ongoing discussion that would be very useful.

Virtually every report points in the opposite direction. The member for Beaches-Woodbine indicated, as have other members in their remarks, the member for York South and so on, that in fact no report outside of the three-week rush report the government brought in has spoken in favour of this particular initiative on the part of this government.

What we will look at is US cities, and again members have made reference to that. Talk to Americans. They will tell you: "We love your large cities. We like Toronto because Toronto is different. It's a livable city. It's a city that works. People actually live downtown and stay downtown in Toronto at night. They don't flee to the suburbs."

We've got something very successful today and this government wants to bring in the bulldozer and change that completely and Americanize our province, as they're trying to in so many ways.

Their idea of success, their idea of paradise is New Jersey North, or worse, Mississippi North, because they seem to idolize the ideas which come from the Republican guard south of the border, ideas which are continuing to polarize people in our society, allowing the rich to get richer and the poor to get poorer and the middle class to disappear. That's why we're opposed to this legislation.

The arguments the government puts forward, as they do on so many issues, sound plausible on the surface. They're simplistic and they're simple and that is how the government tries to sell it. In fact, they're engaging now in a multimedia campaign of government advertising paid for by the taxpayers of this province. The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Honourable Chris Stockwell, made a *prima facie* case, or at least a ruling that said the government was in contempt of this Legislature because of a pamphlet put out by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

The spin doctors for the government, the spokespersons for the government, tried to narrow the issue. They made the Minister of Municipal Affairs get up and apologize, and the Premier said, "Yes, we were wrong; we want to correct it," but of course he didn't send a cheque from the Conservative Party which would have corrected it. He wanted to do that, he said, but the issue is beyond that advertising: It's the 200,000 faxes which were sent out with nobody's name on them, with no identification, supposedly from some independent source that agreed with the government, a sneaky attack that backfired on the government when they were caught at it.

But worst of all the government is running ads on television all the time. The people who are watching this program this afternoon should know that every time Mike Harris's face appears on a commercial on television they should be reaching into their pockets because they're paying for that. The opposition, as the Speaker appropriately pointed out in his remarks, does not have that same access to those funds. While he did not express contempt in this case, he did say he was concerned about governments which would do that, not just this government but any future governments.

People should know that the only arguments this government has are simplistic arguments put out on minute-long television commercials where the Premier wants to make everybody feel good. But know that you're paying hundreds of thousands of dollars for those commercials.

There have been meetings held in this city, meetings that have had huge halls booked for the reason — 1,500 people. I attended a meeting in a church here in Toronto where 1,500 grass-roots people were gathered to express their views, people of all political persuasions. I should correct that: perhaps not Reformers. But people of virtually every political persuasion were found at those meetings. They were expressing their concerns. They must have known of the reports by Dr Joseph Kushner of Brock University and some of his colleagues that deal with the fact that bigger isn't always better, that there aren't the economies of scale that governments talk about, that in many cases the costs are even greater when you have a larger unit.



1750

We have also seen this week and last week the dumping on municipalities of all kinds of new responsibilities without the necessary funding to go with them, I've heard even in my own municipality of Niagara, where millions of dollars are going to have to be extracted from local taxpayers through the property tax that does not take into account a person's ability to pay. Why is all this happening? It's because this government is obsessed with a silly, crazy tax cut which is for the rich in this province. When I ask people in my area: "Do you want to see Metropolitan Toronto obliterated? Do you want to see it as one huge city? Do you want to see it ruined? Do you want to see your hospitals closed or do you want to see less service on the highways during storms, or would you rather have that money placed into those vital services?" almost invariably they prefer that, and they're shocked to hear that the government will be borrowing an additional \$5 billion a year to pay for that crazy tax scheme which will largely benefit the richest people in our province.

When people complain, when my municipal colleagues around this province complain, the Premier says they're whiners. He says, "Oh, you people are just whiners." There are a lot of people I know of all political persuasions who are offended by this labelling of municipal representatives as "just a bunch of whiners." They are not that. They remember the bully bill, Bill 26, and they know that Conrad Black is now going to buy the London Free Press, I should note.

By the way, there's a meeting at the city of York, a megacity campaign meeting at York Memorial high school on February 5, 1997, at 7:30 pm.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** I'm glad to have an opportunity to finish off debate for our caucus on this motion, which I have to say very clearly shows the contempt this government has for the democratic process in this province and for the parliamentary process. It may be technically within the rules, as we know it is technically, but it shows on a political level the kind of disregard that Mike Harris and company have for the democratic process in this province.

Here is an issue on which they are doing something completely opposite to what they said they would do in the last election, when they said they would maintain the local municipalities in Metropolitan Toronto — yes, make changes, but those changes would be based upon keeping the local municipalities in Metropolitan Toronto, eliminating the Metro level and then sorting out the services, some going to the new GTA body, some going to the province, some being maintained at the local level. Here they are doing completely the opposite, and they just do it.

They just want to ram it through without public discussion of any serious nature, this from the government and from the Premier who want to pride themselves in saying, "We keep our promises." They're not keeping their promise, and for that reason alone they should be prepared to engage the people of Metropolitan Toronto in a serious discussion. Nobody I've talked to who has thought for more than two minutes about this issue is interested in defending and maintaining the status quo. We certainly are not. There have to be changes in the

way local government functions in Metropolitan Toronto and indeed in the whole GTA, but that does not mean that you ram through, as Mike Harris is doing, this kind of legislation that just says, "We know what's best for you," and even goes to the point of saying that it doesn't matter what the people of Metropolitan Toronto may decide in the referendum that's coming up, because they will simply disregard that.

Time will tell if that will remain the position of Mike Harris and his government. It wasn't that long ago that we had the Minister of Municipal Affairs continue to stand up and say: "No, we're not going to allow the referendum process to go on. We're not going to have the debate of this bill still going on after the referendum has taken place." It took the Premier less than a day, upon his return from his overseas trip, to see that his government was making, politically, a bad mistake in proceeding —

**Ms Churley:** A mega-mistake.

**Mr Silipo:** A mega-mistake in proceeding with that course of action, so he quickly changed that course of action and said: "No, no, we'll allow the referendum to take place. We'll ensure that the bill is still not finalized on the date of the referendum." That much, at least, is happening.

I say that because I think that people across Metropolitan Toronto, as they are engaged now and will continue to be engaged in this debate through the hearings this motion sets out, will see, through that process and through the process of the referendum, that there is still a possibility and an opportunity to get even Mike Harris to change his mind on this.

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth):** You're dreaming.

**Mr Silipo:** The member for Perth says we're dreaming. Then again I say to him, why are you bothering to hold the hearings? Why are you pretending to go through this charade if you're not prepared to listen? It was only earlier today in question period that the Deputy Premier said, "We're interested in hearing from people on this issue." Now the member for Perth says, "You're dreaming if you think that's going to make any difference."

It may be that the member for Perth is telling the truth on this. It may be that this government doesn't care one iota what the people of Metropolitan Toronto think about this issue, but it will have to deal with what to do when in the upcoming referendum people make a democratic choice in favour of or against the megacity. If they choose, as I believe they will, to say no to Mike Harris's scheme, then we will see what Mike Harris will do.

I want to say to the government members that they'd better leave themselves at least a little bit of room on this one, that they'd better leave themselves a little bit of room if they want to pretend that these hearings are going to count for anything. The hearings are going to be there. We're going to go for the next four weeks. We expect — I want to say this very clearly — that the hearings will take place not just here in this Legislative Assembly building but that the committee will travel to the different city halls. We expect that will happen. We will continue to insist that that will happen. We will deal with that, if this motion is passed, through the subcommittee process in setting up the dates and the times of the committee and going to the different city halls.



I think I speak on behalf of our caucus when I say that to deal with the number of people who want to speak on this issue, I for one would be prepared, as the member for St Catharines's amendment to the amendment indicates, even to have the committee continue to sit through the March break to make sure that the people who want to be heard on this issue are heard.

I want to say to people out there watching this debate, following this issue — the great interest that the various citizens groups that are springing up all over the place have shown on this — that the fight is just beginning.

Today the Minister of Municipal Affairs paid us probably the best compliment he could when he said: "You guys over there in the NDP are trying to stall this bill. You're try to stop this bill from being implemented." I say again to the minister, as I said today, that's exactly what we're trying to do. We will use every legal means at our disposal to stop you from implementing this legislation because we think it's fundamentally wrong.

I've been spending the afternoon watching this debate but also downstairs in one of our committee rooms. The irony is just flabbergasting. In that committee room, what were we discussing? Referenda. We had the government members there continue to put forward the position of the government in favour of a law that will guide the referendum process.

#### *Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I appreciate the fact that it's nearly 6 of the clock, but it's virtually impossible now to hear the speaker. The member for Dovercourt.

**Mr Silipo:** We saw in committee, and it's going on as I speak, the government members continue to say that such issues as constitutional amendments should be put to the people in a referendum and then argue that on a question like the amalgamation of six municipalities in Metropolitan Toronto into one, that's too complicated an issue for the people to understand to be able to express their opinion. I don't understand that logic, but then there is no logic to what Mike Harris is doing on this.

I want to suggest on this particular question of the referenda, as I wind down my comments, that I'm having trouble even understanding where the Liberal caucus is on it, because I know that in this House they continue to call upon the government to uphold the referenda process that's going on now in Metropolitan Toronto and yet in committee I continue to hear the Liberal caucus position being that no referenda should be held unless there is all-party agreement. Well, that party over there doesn't agree, so I want to say to my Liberal colleagues, it's important that you get your act together. As my friend from St Catharines likes to remind us, if the enemy is over there, you can't be divided on your position over here.

I want to say to the government members that we —

**Mr Kennedy:** Dave Cooke, what did he say?

**Mr Silipo:** I don't know what Dave Cooke has said, but what I'm telling you is you had better get your act together over here and we, as an NDP caucus, will continue to work with anyone on this issue to oppose what Mike Harris is doing because we believe there should be a referendum in Metropolitan Toronto, there

should be a referendum law to guide all referenda in the future. On this issue Mike Harris needs to listen, and at the end of the day I think he will have to listen to what the people in Metropolitan Toronto have to say.

**The Speaker:** Mr Bradley moves that the amendment to the motion be amended by adding the following:

That the standing committee on general government shall be authorized to meet March 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, in order to travel to the affected municipalities and give proper consideration to the results of local referendums; and that the committee sit the number of days required to accommodate all requests for committee time; and that the committee be authorized to meet from 9 am to 12 pm and 1 pm to 5 pm and 7 pm to 10 pm; and that five additional sessional days be allotted for the second reading stage of the bill; and that four sessional days be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members; it will be a 15-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1802 to 1817.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### **Ayes**

Bartolucci, Rick	Curling, Alvin	Miclash, Frank
Bisson, Gilles	Duncan, Dwight	Morin, Gilles E.
Boyd, Marion	Grandmaître, Bernard	Patten, Richard
Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Caplan, Elinor	Kennedy, Gerard	Pupatello, Sandra
Churley, Marilyn	Kormos, Peter	Ramsay, David
Cleary, John C.	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Silipo, Tony
Conway, Sean G.	Lankin, Frances	Wildman, Bud
Cordiano, Joseph	Marchese, Rosario	Wood, Len
Crozier, Bruce	McGuinty, Dalton	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### **Nays**

Arnott, Ted	Guzzo, Garry J.	Parker, John L.
Baird, John R.	Hastings, John	Pettit, Trevor
Barrett, Toby	Hudak, Tim	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Beaubien, Marcel	Johns, Helen	Ross, Lillian
Boushy, Dave	Johnson, Bert	Runciman, Robert W.
Brown, Jim	Johnson, David	Sampson, Rob
Carroll, Jack	Jordan, W. Leo	Shea, Derwyn
Chudleigh, Ted	Kells, Morley	Sheehan, Frank
Clement, Tony	Klees, Frank	Smith, Bruce
Danford, Harry	Leach, Al	Sterling, Norman W.
DeFaria, Carl	Leadston, Gary L.	Stewart, R. Gary
Doyle, Ed	Marland, Margaret	Tilson, David
Elliott, Brenda	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tsubouchi, David H.
Eves, Ernie L.	McLean, Allan K.	Turnbull, David
Fisher, Barbara	Munro, Julia	Villeneuve, Noble
Fox, Gary	Murdoch, Bill	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Froese, Tom	Mushinski, Marilyn	Witmer, Elizabeth
Gilchrist, Steve	Newman, Dan	Wood, Bob
Grimmett, Bill	O'Toole, John	Young, Terence H.



**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 32, the nays are 57.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

Mr Johnson (Don Mills) moves that the motion be amended by deleting the words "or special order of the House and notwithstanding any other standing order of the House," in the first and second lines of the first paragraph, and inserting in lieu thereof "and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House"; and

That the motion be further amended by striking out the seventh, eighth and ninth paragraphs and inserting the following in lieu thereof:

That upon receiving the report of the standing committee on general government, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, which question shall be decided without debate or amendment; and the bill shall be referred to committee of the whole House;

That one hour shall be allotted to consideration of the bill in committee of the whole House. At the end of that time, those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee of the whole House shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto and report the bill to the House. Any divisions required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put, the members called in once and all deferred divisions taken in succession. All amendments proposed to the bill shall be filed with the Clerk of the Assembly by 2 pm on the sessional day on which the bill is considered in committee of the whole House, and that notwithstanding standing order 9(a), the House be authorized to meet beyond its normal adjournment time until completion of the committee of the whole stage of Bill 103;

That upon receiving the report of the committee of the whole House, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, which question shall be decided without debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading;

That one sessional day be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill. At the end of that sessional day, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Mr Premier, the door should have been locked, actually.

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** The doors weren't locked. I just walked in.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Did we get that on videotape, Speaker?

**The Speaker:** No, there are things rumbling around in my head right now. That's the problem.

At the end of that sessional day, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment;

That in the case of any divisions relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited

to five minutes and no deferral of any division pursuant to standing order 28(g) shall be permitted.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Ayes**

Arnott, Ted	Guzzo, Garry J.	Parker, John L.
Baird, John R.	Hastings, John	Pettit, Trevor
Barrett, Toby	Hudak, Tim	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Beaubien, Marcel	Johns, Helen	Ross, Lillian
Boushy, Dave	Johnson, Bert	Runciman, Robert W.
Brown, Jim	Johnson, David	Sampson, Rob
Carroll, Jack	Jordan, W. Leo	Shea, Derwyn
Chudleigh, Ted	Kells, Morley	Sheehan, Frank
Clement, Tony	Klees, Frank	Smith, Bruce
Danford, Harry	Leach, Al	Sterling, Norman W.
DeFaria, Carl	Leadston, Gary L.	Stewart, R. Gary
Doyle, Ed	Marland, Margaret	Tilson, David
Elliott, Brenda	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tsubouchi, David H.
Eves, Ernie L.	McLean, Allan K.	Turnbull, David
Fisher, Barbara	Munro, Julia	Villeneuve, Noble
Fox, Gary	Murdoch, Bill	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Froese, Tom	Mushinski, Marilyn	Witmer, Elizabeth
Gilchrist, Steve	Newman, Dan	Wood, Bob
Grimmett, Bill	O'Toole, John	Young, Terence H.

**The Speaker:** All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Nays**

Bartolucci, Rick	Curling, Alvin	Miclash, Frank
Bisson, Gilles	Duncan, Dwight	Morin, Gilles E.
Boyd, Marion	Grandmaitre, Bernard	Patten, Richard
Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Caplan, Elinor	Kennedy, Gerard	Pupatello, Sandra
Churley, Marilyn	Kormos, Peter	Ramsay, David
Cleary, John C.	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Silipo, Tony
Conway, Sean G.	Lankin, Frances	Wildman, Bud
Cordiano, Joseph	Marchese, Rosario	Wood, Len
Crozier, Bruce	McGuinty, Dalton	

**Clerk of the House:** The ayes are 57, the nays are 32.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Can we have the same vote on the motion, as amended? No?

All those in favour of the motion, as amended, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Ayes**

Arnott, Ted	Guzzo, Garry J.	Parker, John L.
Baird, John R.	Hastings, John	Pettit, Trevor
Barrett, Toby	Hudak, Tim	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Beaubien, Marcel	Johns, Helen	Ross, Lillian
Boushy, Dave	Johnson, Bert	Runciman, Robert W.
Brown, Jim	Johnson, David	Sampson, Rob
Carroll, Jack	Jordan, W. Leo	Shea, Derwyn
Chudleigh, Ted	Kells, Morley	Sheehan, Frank
Clement, Tony	Klees, Frank	Smith, Bruce
Danford, Harry	Leach, Al	Sterling, Norman W.
DeFaria, Carl	Leadston, Gary L.	Stewart, R. Gary



Doyle, Ed	Marland, Margaret	Tilson, David	Boyd, Marion	Grandmaître, Bernard	Patten, Richard
Elliott, Brenda	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tsubouchi, David H.	Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Eves, Ernie L.	McLean, Allan K.	Turnbull, David	Caplan, Elinor	Kennedy, Gerard	Pupatello, Sandra
Fisher, Barbara	Munro, Julia	Villeneuve, Noble	Churley, Marilyn	Kormos, Peter	Ramsay, David
Fox, Gary	Murdoch, Bill	Wettlaufer, Wayne	Cleary, John C.	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Froese, Tom	Mushinski, Marilyn	Witmer, Elizabeth	Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Silipo, Tony
Gilchrist, Steve	Newman, Dan	Wood, Bob	Conway, Sean G.	Lankin, Frances	Wildman, Bud
Grimmett, Bill	O'Toole, John	Young, Terence H.	Cordiano, Joseph	Marchese, Rosario	Wood, Len
			Crozier, Bruce	McGuinty, Dalton	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Bartolucci, Rick	Curling, Alvin	Miclash, Frank
Bisson, Gilles	Duncan, Dwight	Morin, Gilles E.

**Clerk of the House:** The ayes are 57, the nays are 32.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

It now being well past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 10 of the clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1828.*

## ERRATA

No.	Page	Column	Lines	Should read:
153	6546	2	13	movement. Sioux Lookout: not enough information; not a
153	6546	2	21	Association meeting in Sioux Lookout on February 7.



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Lyn McLeod, Julia Munro, Trevor Pettit,  
Peter L. Preston, Bruce Smith  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum



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of Ontario**

First Session, 36th Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Thursday 30 January 1997**

**Jeudi 30 janvier 1997**



**Speaker**  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

**Président**  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

**Clerk**  
Claude L. DesRosiers

**Greffier**  
Claude L. DesRosiers



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 30 January 1997

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 30 janvier 1997

*The House met at 1002.  
Prayers.*

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Phillips moved private member's notice of motion number 39:

That in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should release to the House and the public the secret studies showing the community-by-community impact of their downloading so the mayors, councils, ratepayers, community organizations and the public can fairly evaluate the massive changes in municipal restructuring that the Legislature is being asked to approve.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Pursuant to standing order 96(c)(i), the honourable member has 10 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** This is a resolution that I hope will have the support of all members of the House. It's undeniable that the announcements by the government in the last two weeks are going to fundamentally change Ontario. I'll stick to the government's own numbers: The government has announced that it is planning to take about \$5.4 billion of expenses off property tax, that is, the residential portion of education, but it is going to add \$6.355 billion of new costs to the property taxpayer. Those are the government's own numbers and so I hope that on the government side there's no disputing those numbers.

That is a massive shift of costs on to property taxpayers, and mainly residential property taxpayers. We have been told that there will be some funds available to offset that. That's \$1 billion more that the people in Ontario are going to be asked to pay on their property taxes, \$1 billion taken from provincial responsibility and put on property tax.

We've been told: "Well, don't worry about it. There are funds available to handle that." The problem is, when you cut through it all, as we now are finding out and certainly as the municipalities are finding out — we have a report here from municipalities showing that in their opinion the province has now added about \$1.2 billion of costs on to the property taxpayers.

The funds that they say are available are taken into account. The province says: "Don't worry. We're going to give you a billion-dollar fund to handle the offloading." The problem is that at the same time as they announced that they announced that they were cancelling a \$666-million fund. So without question property

taxpayers in the province of Ontario are being asked to take on \$1 billion of added costs and the province will provide, at maximum, \$335 million of extra revenue. Those are the province's own numbers.

In addition to that, the province has announced that something called the business occupancy tax is gone. The province eliminated the business occupancy tax. That, according to the government numbers, is \$1.6 billion of revenue to municipalities. That's about 11% of the property tax revenue that was available to municipalities, that was being used to cover costs in the municipalities. A week and a half ago the government said: "That's gone, eliminated. You can no longer have a business occupancy tax." But it has to be made up somehow. The municipalities can't simply find \$1.6 billion out of thin air, so that, according to the government, will be loaded on to the other property taxpayers.

People who are paying property tax in this province should recognize two clear things from the government announcement: They have added \$1 billion of extra costs and they've told the municipalities, "No longer can you have business occupancy tax of \$1.6 billion."

What does all that mean? What we're hearing from mayors and regional chairs across the province is that just to cover those things property taxes are going to have to go up 10%. I'm sure all the residential property taxpayers who are listening will say: "That is incredible. How am I going to pay 10% more property tax just because the province has decided to offload their responsibilities on to the residential property taxpayers?"

The proposals that have been announced we were told were in response to the Who Does What panel. Mr David Crombie headed it up, but it was 12 individuals selected by the Premier, hand-picked, people I assume he had confidence in. Mr Crombie said about the proposals to download, and this was a letter provided to the government on December 23, that if the province proceeded with this downloading it would "undo much of the work accomplished by the disentangling proposals." Much of their work would be undone by this. He further said: "The panel strongly opposes such a move. We are unanimous in the view that if there is a choice between placing education or health and welfare on the property tax, it is clearly preferable to continue to rely on the property tax for the funding of education."

What we have is the government acknowledging that it is adding to the property taxpayer \$1 billion of extra costs, the panel that proposed the key recommendation of the government telling it, "Don't do it. We strongly urge you not to do it. We are unanimous in rejecting it," and it's proceeding with it.

I don't know how other members are finding it, but I am finding in my municipality that the councillors, the



mayor, but equally important, residents, property taxpayers, are saying: "What is this going to mean? I see you people down there voting on things. I see you are being asked to approve six major bills." The public should recognize that the government has six major bills before the Legislature — here they are, from Bill 103 to Bill 108 — and we are being told we must approve these. The government plans, I gather, to have them as law in the next few weeks, and yet we do not have from the government what it means to residential property taxpayers. That's the purpose of this resolution.

1010

Surely all of us, Liberal caucus members, NDP caucus members and government members, are owed from the cabinet the information that they based their decision on to make these moves. We surely can't proceed to approve in principle laws that will implement the things the government is talking about without knowing what it means to residential property taxpayers, and the government has those numbers. The government, the cabinet, made the decision on the basis of these reports, but they are not sharing them with the public, so we are being asked to approve something where we're not being given the information we need to approve it.

We've talked, for example, with AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, a well-regarded organization of our municipal leaders, and they're saying they need it. They have to have that information from the government to make an informed decision about what you are proposing here. Certainly I suspect that all of us, as we head home to our constituents tonight for our meetings with them tomorrow and over the weekend, will want to be able to answer questions from them. When the mayor or the council phones us and says, "What does all this mean to me?" I don't think any of us want to be in the position of saying: "The cabinet know it. The cabinet made that decision but they won't give us the information." So I'm proposing this resolution simply to say to the cabinet: "Share with the House the information that you used to make this decision. What will be the impact on our communities?"

I for one find it impossible to make a decision on fundamental shifting of long-term care for our seniors. Our seniors should recognize that their future long-term care is being shifted on to the property taxpayer. I find it difficult for our young people who rely on social assistance for their housing, their clothing, their shelter, to say that it's being shifted on to the property taxpayer without knowing the implications of that. I find it very difficult to approve this where we are shifting child care on to the property taxpayer without knowing the implication, and ambulance services and health services, all going on to the property taxpayer without knowing the implications. Very clearly, surely the cabinet owe us that. Surely they owe us the information that they made the decision on and surely they owe us the tabling of those reports so all of us can deal with our constituents on a reasoned, rational basis.

As we embark on what is a fundamental, total shift in the way Ontario services will be provided, I think all of us should support this and we will finally get the information the cabinet made its decision on.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** I rise today as the representative of the NDP caucus to give our support as a caucus to the motion that is being brought forward by the member who happens to be the finance critic for the Liberal Party.

I find it really ironic that a Conservative government in 1997 puts itself and puts the rest of the province in the position of going ahead and doing the amount of restructuring that it's doing within municipalities without releasing any kind of information, without releasing any kind of impact study about what this means to municipalities and, more importantly, what it means to the taxpayers of the city of Timmins, the city of Toronto and the rest of the people in Ontario.

I remember well and the finance critic from the Liberal Party and other members who were here from 1990 to 1995 remember well how the Conservative Party, the then third party in this House, used to at every occasion come to committee and come to this Legislature every time saying to the NDP government and prior to that the Liberal government under David Peterson, "We want financial impact studies." They would come before the committee and say: "How can a government move forward with any kind of initiative without having some kind of financial impact study? The private sector would never do that. We're smarter than you. We need to make sure there are impact studies."

The Liberal government and the NDP government did that. We released information whenever we were going forward with a huge initiative such as what the government is doing, and the numbers were shared, the information was given. People at least knew the direction the government was going and had the details of that direction so that they could figure out how best to deal with it, either working with the government or working against the government.

In this case, the Tories completely forgot what they said when they were in opposition. It's a complete flip-flop in position from the position they took when they were the opposition party in this Legislature. I remember well that it was the position of the Tories that nothing should happen by the hand of the provincial government without having a financial impact study. They are now government and what do they do? They will not release what should be public information to the citizens of this province in order to be able to determine what the effects of the policies of this government are. What's worse, they're keeping that information from people. It's almost as if they're trying to operate in secrecy, behind closed doors of the cabinet, and to not allow people in this democracy to have a say.

I say to the Conservative government, you were right when you were in opposition to demand that governments provide financial impact studies. We did it when we were the NDP government. Why don't you do the same? That's the first thing I would say to you.

The second thing is I would say specifically to the direction this government is going with regard to transferring over the amount of services it will be transferring to municipalities that you have a real big credibility problem. When you started off this whole exercise of down-loading services on to municipalities, you had same fair-



weather friends. You had people out in the business community, you had prominent Tories, you had mayors, you had councillors who were saying: "Yes, this sounds like a good idea. We believe in disentanglement." Well, we all believe in disentanglement until it starts to entangle us. The governments at the municipal level are starting to find out that indeed this is not disentanglement; this is strictly offloading.

The wheels are starting to fly off the wagon of the Tory party because we are now starting to see people in our community across Ontario speak out in opposition to what this government is doing, not only here in Metropolitan Toronto but across the entire province. Those speaking out are not just New Democrats or Liberals who you would expect to be speaking out in opposition to what this government is doing because philosophically, as New Democrats or Liberals, we believe it's the wrong direction. Tories themselves, prominent Tories across this province, are standing up and saying: "This is wrong. You're going in the wrong direction."

A case in point is your own appointee to the Who Does What committee. Mr Crombie, a prominent Tory cabinet minister of the past, a chair of the board of trade, a person who has had party membership within the Tory party for years, the person you appointed to the committee, is saying: "Whoa. You're not doing what we recommended as a commission. You're going in the opposite direction and in fact what you're doing is wrong. It's going to hurt people and it's going to hurt the financial position of the province of Ontario."

The board of trade of the city of Toronto, certainly not an NDP bastion of support, is standing up and saying the government is going in the wrong direction. Chambers of commerce in northeastern, northwestern and central Ontario are now starting to speak out in public and say, "There is a problem in the direction this government is taking."

Point in fact: In the community of Hearst the chamber of commerce is saying: "Whoa. This is not disentanglement. This is offloading. Offloading means to say that we as business owners in our communities will end up having to pay an increasing amount of tax to be able to offset the transfer of services that you're imposing on the municipalities," and the residents as well are speaking out the same.

So it's not just people in opposition who you would expect to be speaking out in opposition to what you are doing. There is grass-roots, widespread support for the opposition view, which is that the government is going in the wrong direction.

1020

Should the government try to find ways to run government more efficiently? Of course. That's what the government of Bob Rae was doing, that's what the government of David Peterson prior was doing, and that's what I would expect from the government of Mike Harris. But the principle by which we moved as a provincial government under Bob Rae was that we believed that public services were an important part of our community and that we had to ensure that health care, that education, that cleaning our streets, that public transit, all of those services on which we depend not only for the social side

of what it means to our community but for the economic growth, need to be maintained in some way. How you make those work and how you make them more efficient, nobody argues, but what you're doing is not making them more efficient. You're going to allow municipalities over a period of time to get rid of all those services entirely because they won't be able to afford to foot the bill.

A case in point is the city of Timmins. They're one of the municipalities that probably got their numbers together quicker than most other municipalities across the province. The city of Timmins has so far figured out what this offloading of services means to the citizens of the city of Timmins. They've quantified. They said: "What does it mean when the province transfers over 50% of the cost of family benefits on to the municipality? What does it mean when they transfer over 50% of the cost of GWA? What does it mean when they transfer over 100% of the cost of public transportation or transit authorities? What does it mean when they dump all the highways on to the municipality? What does it mean when they transfer over 100% of the cost of ambulance services on to the municipality? What does it mean to the citizens of Timmins when they transfer over the entire cost, or 50% of the cost, of community long-term care such as Meals on Wheels and home care and VON? What does it mean to the taxpayer?"

They've gone through all of this and they've looked and they've quantified it. Do you know what it comes out to? When we figure out the amount of money that the city of Timmins is going to be getting back by way of the educational portion of assessment of property taxes on residents, and you figure out what they're going to have to pay in addition, the shortfall at this point — are you ready? — is \$12 million. Now, to the city of Toronto, where there are a lot of people, it may not sound like a lot of money. But in our community, if the municipality was to try to offset the loss in revenue by strictly a tax increase, do you know how much of a tax increase that would be? Over 40%.

I don't think the city of Timmins will raise taxes by 40%, but the Mike Harris government is putting the city of Timmins in a position where they have to decide, do we give the citizens of the city of Timmins a 40% tax increase in order to afford the services that we presently have in the city of Timmins, or do we get rid of the services altogether? Well, I know what the answer's going to be. It's going to be a combination of both. You're going to see property taxes over the next couple of years skyrocket. We have had no tax increases, or minimal tax increases, in most cities across the province of Ontario — a case in point is the city of Timmins — for at least four or five years. Municipal governments have been very responsible in keeping the lid on taxes.

This provincial government is going to put those cities in the position where they're going to have to make a decision: "Do I get rid of public transportation? Do I cut back land ambulance transfer services in a community? Do I shut down the Golden Manor or reduce services to seniors in our community?" I know what Dennis Welin and I know what Mike Doody and I know what Phil Goudreau and I know what Mayor Power are going to say in the city of Timmins: "Of course not. We can't



afford to do that. If we get rid of those services, people are going to get hurt." So they're going to try to find some ways to find some efficiency in the system, but they ain't going to find it because, let me tell you, there ain't no fat on the bone. We're having to cut into the core of the bone at this point.

What do you think municipal governments have been doing for the last five years? They've been reducing expenditures within their municipalities and making themselves more efficient so they didn't have to give a tax break. But you're making them make the choice of raising property taxes and cutting back on services. And when the citizens of the city of Timmins start getting their tax increases, which they will get over the next couple of years, they will remember the Mike Harris government, I can guarantee you. They will remember the Mike Harris government as the government that put municipalities in the province of Ontario in a position of having to raise property taxes in double-digit numbers. Mark my words.

They will also remember that it was the Mike Harris government that made it so that services in communities that we presently enjoy, basic services like ambulance service, like transit, like cleaning the snow from our streets — because it does snow in northern Ontario — taking care of seniors in their homes, when those services start to deteriorate, the citizens of Timmins, as they will across the province of Ontario, will remember it was the Mike Harris government that started that.

What is Harris really up to? This has nothing to do with balancing a budget. This whole move on the part of the provincial government in the end is not doing anything towards trying to deal with the issue of the deficit. What really this is all about is for them to be able to pay for their \$5-billion tax cut. How ludicrous. What business in their right mind, what business with any kind of common sense, would say, "As I'm trying to restructure my operation so that I can lower my costs, I'm going to lower my costs and at the same time I'm going to lower the amount of revenue that comes in the door"? Come on; give me a break. What do you think people are?

I was at the Timmins chamber of commerce meeting on Monday where we had an economist from the Bank of Montreal give a dissertation about what the economy is going to do in the future, and in the end do you know what the business community leaders in our community were asking this guy? "Sir, can you explain to us the tax cut? It doesn't seem to make a lot of sense." That is what the business leaders in our community were saying.

I don't say that they don't support the Tory government at this point. They still do, but they are really starting to worry about what this government is doing, because it doesn't make a whole bunch of sense. When they look at what you're doing, downloading all of the services on to the community, they're starting to say, "What government in their right mind, anyone with any kind of common sense, would try to fund a \$5-billion tax cut through the kind of offloading you're doing to municipalities?" And I subscribe. I think it's absolutely ludicrous. If the government wants to reduce costs, that's one thing, but you don't reduce costs and cut taxes at the

same time. It's counterproductive. In actual fact, it will hurt the economy; it won't help it.

The other thing that I think needs to be said in the last couple of minutes I have is the whole manner by which this government operates. One thing that I'm hearing more and more — and I'm sure we're hearing it in northwestern Ontario, we're hearing it in Toronto, we're hearing it in the Ottawa Valley, we're hearing it in southwestern Ontario — is people are really beginning to wonder: "Do we have a democracy in Ontario? Is there a democracy in this province?"

This government is moving forward and is dismantling — first of all, they eliminated a number of MPPs in this House for the next election. Most people at first said, "Yes, we like that, we like politicians to be picked on," but they look at what's happening with municipal governments as that you're basically eliminating the ability for public representation on municipal governments. You're doing the same on school boards, and you're moving forward with your agenda without any regard for the public. In fact, you're saying that if the people in the city of Toronto were to vote by referendum en masse in opposition to your megacity project, you wouldn't even listen, and people are saying there's something wrong here.

I want to remind you, and I need to say this: In Ontario, as in the rest of Canada, we do not have an executive democracy. We don't have a democracy where only the Premier and the cabinet are the ones who are able to call the entire shot. There's supposed to be a role for backbenchers of the government, as well as opposition members, to bring forward points of view to this Legislature so that whatever the government does, it's tempered against the views of the various people of this province and we're able to find some sort of accommodation in the agenda of the government so that yes, the government agenda can be met, but it's met in a way that satisfies some of the concerns of the people of Ontario.

The one thing I'm hearing all over as I travel around this province is that the people of this province are really starting to doubt the sincerity of this government when it comes to the question of how they operate, and second of all, they're saying, "We are losing our democracy." They're really uncomfortable with how this government is operating by not allowing, as this resolution calls for, the information that should be public information into the public realm so that people can take a look at the effect of what you're doing. I say to the government, you're wrong. This is supposed to be a Legislature for the people of the province of Ontario. The public has a right to know.

The member for Scarborough-Agincourt asks very simply that the government release what should be public information to the people of this province so that the people themselves in our democracy are able to take a look at the information and say: "What are the pluses and minuses to what this government is doing? If there are pluses, fine. If there are minuses, let's deal with them, but at least let us as a people get the information so that we can take a look at it and cut through the chaff and see what really is going on."



So I call on the government and I call on members of the back bench specifically in the government to do what your party said you would do when you were in opposition, and that is to release that kind of information so there can be real debate, so there can be real information in the hands of people, so that they're able to deal with what the government agenda is all about.

1030  
**Ms Isabel Bassett (St Andrew-St Patrick):** I welcome the opportunity to respond to Mr Phillips's resolution. I'd like to use this time to address some of the misconceptions and misinformation that it contains about the government's efforts to realign government services and sort out funding and the delivery of services to Ontarians.

First of all, I'd like to remind the House about some of the things that this government is doing to help municipalities deliver effective services to Ontarians and relieve the burden on property taxpayers. The greatest burden on the residential property tax base is the cost of education. Education costs make up as much as 60% of the residential property tax bill. It's the fastest-growing item of that tax bill. From 1984 to 1995, the cost of education spiralled up a staggering 82%, contributing to property tax increases of about 120% during this same time frame.

By taking education off the property tax bill we're accomplishing two things: First, we're ensuring a future of stable, consistent education funding right across the province; and second, we're relieving residential property taxpayers of a burden that we project to reach \$6.2 billion by the year 2000.

By assuming responsibility for funding education, the government is freeing up tax room so municipalities can take control of their new responsibilities and deliver a tax cut at the same time. Through the Fair Municipal Finance Act we're getting rid of the business occupancy tax, an outdated and cumbersome system of taxing business that reflected the reality of the business community in 1904 when the tax was first imposed.

Municipalities will have the flexibility to recover this revenue through property taxes on any or all classes of property, so long as they don't add to unfair differences in tax burdens between property classes; or by acting responsibly and planning effectively and creatively, they can find efficiencies in their spending and pass these savings on to their taxpayers. If they choose to recover the business occupancy tax revenue, they can certainly do so through property taxes on any or all classes of property, so long as they don't add to unfair differences in tax burdens between property classes.

Mr Phillips seems to suggest that the government is divesting itself completely of responsibility for social assistance and long-term health care, and offloading them on to the municipalities. As we've been saying, the province is entering into a 50-50 partnership with municipalities to fund and deliver these services. With the steady decline in social assistance costs that we've seen since June 1995 and with the investments the government will be making in municipalities, there is every reason, with prudent and efficient management and planning, municipalities should be able to deliver both a tax cut and better services to their communities.

Municipalities will take control of the delivery of services like libraries, policing, municipal transit, land ambulances and provincial offences. This division of responsibilities makes sense. Local governments understand their communities better than Queen's Park can and will now have the opportunity to set their own priorities and deliver services in a more effective manner. Taxpayers will now know what level of government to hold accountable.

We acknowledge that these are significant changes and we'll be consulting with stakeholders to determine how these changes should be designed. The exact design of these changes will depend in large part on the results of feedback from our stakeholders.

Over the next five years the province will invest more than \$6.3 billion in municipalities to help them adjust to their new responsibilities. Besides taking education off the residential property tax bill, the province is investing \$1 billion every year through the community reinvestment fund to meet special community needs.

My colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has also announced a fund of \$800 million over the next four years to help municipalities with short-term capital and operating adjustments. The \$700-million social assistance fund will help communities that face costs arising from unforeseen economic circumstances. The amount is enough to cover the municipal share of potential welfare cost increases, even in the unlikely event of a severe economic downturn. The government will provide an additional \$1.6 billion in 1996 and 1997 through the municipal support grant.

The government is also planning to consult with stakeholders to obtain their views on how these investment funds should be distributed and administered.

An up-to-date property assessment system will also cut back on the number of assessment appeals — 200,000 province-wide in 1995, of which 100,000 were in Metro Toronto — that have eroded the property tax base and property tax revenues over the years.

Mr Phillips's resolution suggests that our reforms will have a profound effect on local taxpayers. If he's referring to the reduction of as much as 10% in residential property tax that we predict by the year 2000, our reforms will affect taxpayers, there's no doubt about it. If he's referring to the fact that taxpayers will be able to see clearly that their taxes are based on local spending decisions, not on an uneven and unfair assessment system, of course taxpayers will be affected by our reforms, but positively affected. As I have pointed out today, we are changing things profoundly for taxpayers, profoundly and for the better.

In bringing forward the reforms we've introduced this month, we've weighed a number of factors with great care. We've considered all the recommendations of the Who Does What committee. Their recommendations have been of immense help in delivering this package of reforms to the province. We've adopted many of the panel's recommendations, in whole or in part.

Because not all of the design elements of the changes we've introduced this month have been determined yet, it would be premature and speculative to develop municipality-by-municipality analysis of impacts. Any analysis



developed currently won't necessarily reflect what municipalities will ultimately experience. For example, the allocation of the costs of GO Transit to municipalities has been referred to Milt Farrow as part of his review of the Greater Toronto Services Board.

We also want to consult with municipalities about the design and allocation of the community reinvestment fund, and the allocation method will obviously affect the overall impact on municipalities.

As the Premier and the Minister of Finance have said, this government is prepared to listen to and work with our municipal partners and with municipal organizations to help them manage changes so that taxes don't have to increase and services are protected.

We understand that municipalities need and want information. Key information is being gathered right now by assessors across the province, the complete reassessment of Ontario's properties and the development of a new property assessment base. The Ministry of Finance intends to release information on the impacts of reassessment under the proposed new system when a sufficiently large sample of data based on current 1996 values is available, in August of this year.

The measures we've introduced this month will go a long way towards seeing that Ontarians get the kind and quality of services they need at a price they can afford. We're making sure that Ontario truly turns the corner towards jobs, prosperity and renewed hope for the future and our children's future.

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** I would like to begin by congratulating my colleague the member for Scarborough-Agincourt on this, which I consider a timely resolution. This member has explained the government's very own numbers very clearly to the people of Ontario. I have to say that my municipal leaders are certainly looking for these numbers and for the documents, which the cabinet does have, that will explain to each municipality what effect it's going to have on them.

When I contacted 13 municipalities in the region of northwestern Ontario, I found out from them that in their initial estimates it's going to cost them much more to pay for the services that are being dumped on them; not one of those 13 municipalities indicated that it was going to cost their taxpayers less. Every one of them indicated that there would be increased taxation and the possibility of a reduction in services, and that's what this government is going to do.

We remember that famous document the Premier brought to northern Ontario during the campaign. It was called A Voice for the North. He suggested in it that there would no longer be the imposing of solutions to northern Ontario problems by Queen's Park. He said that right in that document. Folks in northern Ontario who are aware of that commitment know that this is not what's happening today. He also said that a Harris government would work closely with northern communities to forge a better working relationship. My municipal leaders are saying that is not happening, and I think the resolution today speaks very well to that.

1040

I'll be meeting with my municipal representatives in Sioux Lookout next week and so will the parliamentary

assistant. I would think by then the parliamentary assistant will have those numbers the resolution is asking for from the cabinet, the studies that show the community-by-community impact. The reason I say that is that the minister himself, the Honourable Mr Leach, said only two days ago in this House that the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development will also be able to provide all the answers that anyone in Kenora riding would care to ask for.

What he's saying is that he's confident this parliamentary assistant is going to provide those answers. What I'm saying is that he's going to need those community-by-community documents which the resolution suggests we all have to see, so I'm certainly looking forward to that.

What Mike Harris has done in essence is broken a promise to northerners in which he has indicated there would be no dumping of service on to the local taxpayer. We remember that very clearly. In his Common Sense Revolution he stated very clearly that there would be no dumping, this dumping would not take place. In essence, what we've seen here and what we've seen very clearly explained by the member today is that yes, there will be a cost.

The previous speaker just indicated they're removing the education tax from the tax rolls. They're doing that, but what I'm hearing from every municipal leader is that in return they're giving us additional taxation. As has been indicated earlier, that will certainly appear on the tax bill of every resident in every community across the province when that's in.

As we all know, the Premier has made a commitment to the people of Ontario. He has made a commitment that he will follow through on at any cost. We have a good number of people suggesting that it's the bottom line, it's this government's bottom line that's leading to all of this. What the Premier wants to do is to ensure that his friends get that tax cut, and that tax cut, we all know, will benefit the richest in the province, those who have the highest earning capability in this province. It's going to be services, it's going to be an increase in municipal taxes for all of my communities in northwestern Ontario. I look forward to the cabinet showing us those documents that we know they have to indicate what it's going to do to each community in this province and to the communities in northwestern Ontario.

I would just like to congratulate the member for bringing forth some numbers and explaining them very well in terms of what this is going to do to every municipality in the province.

**Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk):** This resolution from the member for Scarborough-Agincourt makes note that the government will remove \$5.4 billion from the property tax levy. We all know this is the education portion of the property tax base, and the resolution states that we then are transferring \$6.355 billion of current provincial spending to the property tax base, for a total of \$955 million more expense.

I feel it points to the fact that the opposition knows what we on the government side have been saying all along, that these measures will save property taxpayers money, because when you add the \$1-billion community reinvestment fund to the \$5.4-billion education cost



reduction, one has \$6.4 billion to work with. This is just for starters.

Using the numbers presented in this resolution, we find that this means collectively municipalities are being handed a \$45-million surplus. This is a far cry from the tales of woe we've been hearing from the opposite side and in fact reinforces what the government has been saying: that property taxes can decrease.

Now add an additional \$700-million initial contribution into the municipal social assistance reserve fund and an additional \$800 million for the municipal capital and operating restructuring fund, which we've also heard today. You now have \$1.545 billion over and above what the municipalities need to function and to deal with these changes.

In addition, education costs, which we know are being taken off property taxes, are rising — 82% over the past 10 years in Ontario. Welfare, one of the key concerns of local government, as its share goes from 20% to 50%, is declining in cost and will continue to decline as Ontario's work-for-welfare programs come on stream. Education alone is projected to rise to \$6.2 billion by the year 2000. I know my farm land and my home can no longer afford this kind of school-board-driven property tax increase. Ontario data show a 120% increase over the past 10 years.

This government is investing in change to cut taxes. We are investing in municipal restructuring to cut property taxes. We are putting up the money to help municipalities restructure and to make their operations more efficient. That is why this government has established the \$1-billion-a-year community reinvestment fund, the \$800-million capital and operating restructuring fund and the \$700-million social assistance fund that we have heard of earlier this morning. In total, the province is investing \$6.3 billion in municipalities in the next five years. Previous governments never did that. They studied disentanglement, they set up committees to go around the province to consult with municipalities, but there was no action.

We could spend months debating all of the studies that have been done on municipal governance in this province which were never acted upon, but that would only add to the money wasted and the disrespect shown to the people who did those studies. Why didn't governments act on those studies and reports? Very simple: They are afraid to change. Really, the whole debate in this House over the last three weeks has been about change and who dares to try. The changes introduced will have a positive impact on governance. The status quo will not.

Our government has a vast and clear vision. Opposition objections have tended to be half as vast and only half as clear. Education taxes were going to increase; we will remove that constant burden from the property taxpayer. We know that many municipal councils would wait for the school board to set the education levy and then the municipal councils would try to reduce their own budget to buffer the tax increase caused by the school board. The result: Many councils delivered their service inadequately because of the school board.

Municipalities have learned to deliver very effectively, and I'm proud to say that in my riding in 1995, according

to a Towntrak benchmarking study, Delhi was ranked the most cost-effective municipality in the province when compared to communities of similar size. In fact, five municipalities in Haldimand-Norfolk were judged to be significantly above the average. That's why I'm confident municipalities will continue to deliver in the most effective way when they implement the new changes that have been announced.

As this government is committed to helping municipalities through the transition, we will consult with local government to obtain their views before making final arrangements on any transfer of dollars from the funds which have already been mentioned.

To conduct a municipality-by-municipality analysis of impacts is premature and speculative at this time. Any analysis will not reflect the real changes that will affect municipalities, but the community reinvestment strategy is designed to ensure that no municipality is unfairly affected. As municipalities make projections for property tax levels for next year, 1998, and beyond, they should bear in mind our projections for the year 2000 and the fact that local government will not have to raise that \$6.2-billion board of education burden by the year 2000. Ontario's property taxes will be 10% lower than they are now. That's the bottom line.

1050

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** I rise in support of the resolution presented by the member for Scarborough-Agincourt. I think what the member has very simply and very clearly brought to the House asks what he and members of the opposition have been asking ever since the government has been downloading on to the various municipalities.

Today the government has an excellent opportunity to come out clearly and to show the people of Ontario that it cares, that it wants to inform the people of Ontario about its actions, about its decisions — but not only that; I think it's important to show how they do that. The reason why the member for Scarborough-Agincourt has brought this resolution to the House today and why we have been pestering the government with calls to give us the information is so that we can debate the actions of the government in this House and so that the people of Ontario can judge for themselves who is right, who is wrong and who is giving the right information or who is passing the wrong information. When the government says, "We are doing certain things, we are going to lower taxes," the resolution simply says, "Give us the information, give us those figures."

Do you know what the problem is with the government when it says to do one thing and it cannot back up that information? Take for example the city of North York, my own city, which is no different from any other city or municipality in Ontario. You have taxpayers who have paid very dearly through their realty taxes to build good parks, community centres and recreation facilities. You have the mayors of those municipalities saying: "You know what? You are downloading on us a huge responsibility. Our people won't be able to afford to use those recreation facilities we have built with their tax dollars over the years."



If the mayors of those municipalities are wrong, then the government today has the sacrosanct responsibility of giving us that information, of passing that information to the taxpayers so they can see for themselves that the government is right and that we are wrong, so the people can assess that information and say: "The government is right when it says taxes are going to come down." But we'd like to know, we'd like to have that information.

The fact is that even the government itself says there's going to be a shortfall. The government keeps on saying we are going to have a \$700,000 or \$800,000 fund to cover just in case of some problems various municipalities may run into. They are saying they're going to have a \$1.6-billion or \$1.8-billion reserve fund. What do they say? That the local municipalities will have to contribute to this particular fund, and that is not fair, that is not right. They shouldn't be doing that. We are saying, "If you're going to do that, then give us the information where the local municipalities are going to get the money."

We are not the only ones accusing the government of covering up the truth, the information we should be having. Take for example the board of trade or independent businesses of Ontario and Canada saying to the government: "Don't do that. This is going to decimate the small business communities in our province and in Metro." Mr Crombie says, "Don't do that because taxes are going to go up." Can you imagine some \$350 or \$400 for each individual homeowner? I think it's going to be disastrous.

I encourage the members of the House, the members of the third party to support the resolution as presented by the member for Scarborough-Agincourt. It's the information we need, the information the people need to base their decision on the referendum that is coming up. It's an opportunity for the government to show the opposition, to show the people of Ontario that it really wants to pass the true, good information.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I'm pleased that the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, Gerry Phillips, has put forward this resolution because he is asking what so many people and municipalities across Ontario are asking. He's saying, "Please give us the figures." He's saying, "In the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should release to the House and the public the secret studies showing the community-by-community impact of their downloading so the mayors, councils, ratepayers, community organizations and the public can fairly evaluate the massive changes in municipal restructuring that the Legislature is being asked to approve." What a marvellous resolution this is.

The people I just described, the Premier described as whiners. I was reading a headline the other day in a newspaper that in fact said that. It said "Harris Chides Municipal Whiners." You may have seen that yourself, Mr Speaker. I was shocked because I know many people in the municipal field right across Ontario, some who are Progressive Conservatives, and they must have been shocked to see that the Premier was calling them whiners simply because they were standing up for their own communities. But they needed more information. That's what my colleague the member for Scarborough-Agincourt is

trying to do, get this information for them. If the information is so favourable to the government, then surely they would want to release it. It makes me believe that the secret reports to which Mr Phillips is referring are embarrassing to the government and that that's why they're burying them.

Certainly we won't find them on the television commercials we're seeing on a daily basis on our television screens. We have the Premier one day in a classroom, and the next day he's with some electrical wires and he's going to straighten that out, and the next day he's at a hockey rink. Most of these ads, certainly the ones from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the ones from the Ministry of Education, are being paid for completely by the taxpayers of this province. Every time somebody turns on the television set and sees the Premier on the television set, they should know that they are paying for it, that they have to reach into their wallet.

The people who are seeing their municipalities downloaded upon, seeing their hospitals close, seeing significant changes that are taking away essential services, should know that money instead is going to put the Premier on the television screens, and they should be justifiably annoyed about that.

You hear the government speakers out there, and they have the code words they're supposed to use given to them by the Premier's office. Message of the day: Anybody who opposes them is for the status quo, or people oppose change, because they've been told by their American friends in the Republican Party that these are good words to use, that they will resonate well with the public, except the public knows this government is moving too quickly, too drastically and is not looking at the ramifications of its actions. That's what my colleague is talking about in this particular resolution.

All of this that is being done, all this downloading that we're seeing — I know in my own area, the region of Niagara, it's going to cost them \$43 million more; the region of Hamilton-Wentworth, \$121 million; Metro Toronto, \$387 million; and so on — is being done to finance this bizarre tax scheme.

My colleague Gerry Phillips, the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, who is the Liberal finance critic, months ago pointed out that this government, by moving in the direction of having to borrow \$5 billion per year to give an income tax cut to people, was going to get itself into trouble: first, have to borrow money and increase the accumulated debt of the province of Ontario; and second, have to make drastic cuts that even the most ultraconservative of government members would not have recognized were going to come about.

Who warned us of that? Gerry Phillips warned us of that. That's why today in this resolution he's simply asking for information. He's asking for hidden reports out there, secret reports which will reveal on a municipality-by-municipality basis what the impact will be of all this government dumping on to the municipalities, dumping areas that are bound to rise in cost while relinquishing an area that they know is going to level off and begin to decline in cost. I commend my colleague and I hope all members of the House will support this resolution.



**Mr Phillips:** Just to summarize in the remaining two minutes — I appreciate the comments of all members — to refresh our memory, what we're asking for here is something I have no idea why the government members will not support. It's simply saying to the cabinet, "Give us the information on which you made this decision." We have had the Association of Municipalities of Ontario asking for this, the mayors asking for this, and your own handpicked Who Does What panel, Mr David Crombie, saying, "This must be provided."

I think you'll have difficulty in defending to the Chatham council that you refused to give this information, to the Woodstock council, to the Niagara Falls councils, to the Etobicoke council, certainly to the Scarborough council, all of which are saying, "Give us the information." I assure you that this request is coming from across the province, from mayors, councillors, the United Way, the board of trade, all of them saying, "What's this going to mean?"

I don't know what the cabinet told you to say today. They probably said, "Listen, the last thing we want to do is release the information." We heard a couple of prepared speeches on it, but I think the members will want to reflect on this: that the mayor of your city will phone you up and say, "Why did you decide to stonewall the release of these reports?" Because that's what it will be.

I look forward to the ultimate vote. I would say to all members that it's in all of our interests that these come out and come out quickly.

1100

## REMEMBRANCE DAY OBSERVANCE ACT, 1997

### LOI DE 1997 SUR L'OBSERVATION DU JOUR DU SOUVENIR

Mr Kells moved second reading of the following bill:  
Bill 112, An Act to observe two minutes of silence on Remembrance Day / Projet de loi 112, Loi visant l'observation de deux minutes de silence le jour du Souvenir.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Mr Kells has 10 minutes to make his presentation.

**Mr Morley Kells (Etobicoke-Lakeshore):** Today I am pleased to rise, rather appropriately at 11 am, in a time reserved for private members' bills and to ask for support for the reinstatement of a noble and enduring ceremony, the two minutes of silence traditionally given on Remembrance Day. I am pleased for two reasons over and beyond the context of my bill.

First, I am pleased because I support the institution of private members' business, as I believe it is an extremely worthwhile allocation of time and is in reality the only specific time given to backbenchers to express and solicit support for their particular ideals. Second, I appreciate this opportunity because indeed it is the first time that I have participated in a non-partisan debate since my reelection to the House in June 1995.

With this in mind, my bill, which is simple in scope but strong in message, has considerable personal meaning for me and flows from personal experience and carries historical impact within my own family and indeed in many ways sums up the reasons I entered public life initially.

Simply put, the legislation is an act to provide for the observance of Remembrance Day in the way that it was initially meant to be. With this in mind, please allow me to explain some of the origins of this moving ceremony and of my reasons for bringing this bill forward now.

By planning and not by chance, I was in London, England, in Remembrance Day week this past November, and because I knew I would be there on this occasion and because I was staying at the Royal Air Force Club, I arranged to take a wreath from the province of Ontario to be displayed at the club and then to be placed on the cenotaph located in Whitehall. Whitehall is the main street leading from Nelson's monument in Trafalgar Square to the House of Commons and is lined with government buildings.

I do not have to tell you that the British place great significance on the reasons for and the celebration of Remembrance Day on the Saturday or Sunday closest to November 11, but I was surprised to learn that the tradition of two minutes' silence on November 11 specifically had fallen into disuse.

Somewhat surprisingly, as these things happen, it finally dawned on a significant number of people that this omission had become the rule and not the exception, and the British set about to rectify it in 1996. As a result, they called for the reinstitution of two minutes' silence at 11 am on November 11. I was there and it was a very moving moment. Everything and everybody stopped to pay homage.

We must remember that we are not just honouring the fallen; we are reaffirming our opposition to wars and particularly to the senseless slaughter that characterized the trench warfare in France in the First World War.

The next logical question would be, why and where did the two minutes' silence originate? Quite by chance, I found the answer in a book. Just recently, I read the latest biography on George Curzon, who was by far the most able Viceroy of India ever sent to govern that great subcontinent. Unfortunately, he never made it to the office of Prime Minister of England, but few would argue with the fact that he was a gifted and extremely well-educated politician whose achievements stand out in the golden era of parliamentary democracy in Britain.

He was a member of the coalition government under Lloyd George that took over half-way through the First World War and he was a personal witness to that terrible carnage. With the war ended, he was called upon to supervise the erection of a permanent cenotaph in Whitehall and to design a moving ritual centred on two minutes' silence along with the haunting lament of the last post. At this juncture I'd like to quote from the book about Curzon:

"Determined that the ceremony should be one of poignant simplicity rather than high-ranking grandeur, he insisted that widows and ex-servicemen should be given priority on the occasion. After it had been decided that the unveiling of the cenotaph should be accompanied by the burial of an unknown soldier in Westminster Abbey, Curzon again planned the ceremony and again stipulated that places should be given 'not to society ladies or the wives of dignitaries, but to the selected widows and mothers of those who had fallen, especially in the



humbler ranks.' Conducted in an atmosphere of emotional intensity seldom matched in Britain, the event aroused such strong feelings that popular opinion demanded an annual service at the site of the cenotaph. One final ceremony was thus given to Curzon to devise, and it has lasted as long as anything he ever did. The Remembrance Day service still performed three quarters of a century later is his creation.

"Curzon gave himself no public role in these ceremonies and, apart from a mention in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, received no credit for them. Yet they owed their success to his ability as an organizer and to the sensitivity with which he created events in which everyone could participate and share a common grief. Curzon was a man of almost unparalleled contrasts, but none is so remarkable as the fact that the director who created the Delhi durbar (to celebrate Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee) also produced Remembrance Day, a ritual that can move to tears even people born after the Second World War. It is typical of Curzon's fate that he's been remembered for the wrong ceremony."

From world history, let me turn to my family history very briefly. Back in 1976, in honour of my own mother, I wrote a short family history for her side of the house. In the process of researching this, it came home to me in a very dramatic way how the two great wars had affected the fortunes of so many Ontario families in so many different ways. Their occurrences disrupted family life, created migration to the cities and to the western provinces of Canada. Again, may I quote from my own little book and my mother's description of the first armistice spontaneous celebration. Bear in mind, my mother was five at the time. She said:

"The McWatters girls on the farm in 1918 can remember vividly the announcement of the armistice that ended the First World War. The mill whistles from Elmvale and Hillsdale blew all day and horns and cowbells could be heard ringing throughout the countryside."

Similarly, as a young lad of nine years old, I can recall vividly the celebrations in Toronto surrounding VE Day and VJ Day. The one picture that stays with me is the sight of the streetcars on Oakwood Avenue draped in bunting and covered with streamers, with the streetcar bells clanging and the crowds filling the streets and doorways.

Nothing explains the meaning more forcefully to me than a little plaque on the United Church in Waverley, the small village from which I hail. There are 30-some names on that plaque representing 10 families. In other words, each family name sent three of their brothers, sons or cousins to war, and this from a church that on a crowded Sunday could only hold 100 parishioners.

From these memories, may I turn to another reason why I believe the recurrence of the two-minute silence is also important. We have in years since the end of the Second World War allowed extensive immigration into Canada, and these new Canadians have played a vital role in the prosperity of our country. Realistically, many who have arrived from countries which were not so vividly involved in the First and Second World Wars and even the subsequent wars in Korea and the American conflict in Viet Nam.

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As a result, they and their children are unaware of the background and historical significance of Remembrance Day. It is fitting at this time in Canada's history to renew our vows to those who have fallen in war and to explain to our new citizens the reason for these considerations. In this way we can help teach them the value of their vote and remind them of the personal sacrifices made by generations of earlier Canadians in support of democracy, which guarantees that same vote.

I think I have time for a personal anecdote. On the Sunday that I walked from Picadilly to Whitehall, I dropped into the Sherlock Holmes pub. It was crowded with veterans and I got talking to a veteran air force pilot from Kent. He asked about his navigator, who was a Canadian, who had promised to come to London year after year but never got past the airport. It was nice that he thought that I might know him, but of course I didn't. He spoke very well of the Canadians who had participated in the war, particularly because the British ranks had been decimated.

In my humble opinion, two minutes of thoughtful time once a year is owed to those we should not forget. But even more important, we should pause to reflect on the futility of conflicts, cherish our democratic right to free speech and the vote, while never forgetting that it is a privilege fought for years ago by a generation who felt the cause was worth the price of their very own life. In my opinion, we should let the tradition continue.

**Mr Gilles E. Morin (Carleton East):** I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak to the private member's bill put forward by the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore.

I would like to compliment him on his presentation and on his moving account of the reasons behind his bill. I am happy to support his proposal of legislating voluntary compliance with two minutes of silence on Remembrance Day because I believe it will help to more firmly establish an important tradition into the social fabric of this province and set a good precedent for the other provinces in Canada.

At the extreme, I imagine some might say, "There is no need for this bill because we observe Remembrance Day as it is by buying poppies and tuning in to Remembrance Day ceremonies broadcast on television or on radio, while our children do special exercises at school."

Many of us, like myself, have attended Remembrance Day ceremonies at monuments such as the war memorial in Ottawa and at similar memorials in many communities across Ontario where veterans and widows have a place of honour for the laying of wreaths in memory of the war dead. In the cold, grey stillness of a November day, the reality of all that was lost is profound and unforgettable. However, more often than not the significance of the day is not given enough importance in our involvement in our day-to-day responsibilities. In that context I would like to consider the impact of the ceremonies as they are enacted in Britain, as described by Mr Kells in his speech.

They are the model of what he is proposing today and I believe are something to aim for here in Ontario. Mr Kells has described the special effort that is made by everyone to stop what they are doing at an appointed



time, to stop and join together to mourn and honour those who suffered and those who died. Even those who might let the moment pass are reminded of it by the silent witness of those around them, a very simple and a very powerful statement.

In Britain and in all of Europe the ceremonies are especially meaningful because nearly every family was touched by loss and every country was either threatened at its borders or in the air or overrun by enemy forces. By luck of circumstance and geography, neither Canada's borders nor our civilians were threatened by the enemy, so unless we or someone in our families served overseas, we have no personal knowledge of war, all the more reason for us to bring the experience home in a way that will have real meaning for us and for our children.

I feel so extremely lucky to be Canadian, but the things that make this country special are the things that allow us to take so much for granted, something we should try not to do. Enactment of this bill would represent our conscious choice to once a year step aside from the rush and hurry of our daily lives to give silent honour to the noble sacrifice of many young men and women who struggled and perished to secure our freedom.

Two minutes of silence: What does that really mean when the ultimate freedom we have is the ownership of our minds and hearts? Of course we cannot legislate pious thoughts for the dead. We do know, however, that habits become part of us, ingrained, as evidence of those values that matter to us most. Habits become traditions and these we leave to our children.

As time presses on and our distance from the great conflicts in history recedes, more than ever we need to make vivid the memory of the deep losses that our country and every nation on earth have borne. The world wars are many years behind us, but we must never assume that the danger is passed. We must not forget that even today there are some 45 regional wars around the world and nations that do not yet accept that wars have no real winners. The lessons of history must be remembered to be lasting, and our responsibility to make sure they are remembered has not diminished.

War is a vicious exercise and the costs are enormous. The beaches at Normandy bear witness to that for visitors to this day. The experience of walking through a cemetery of the war dead is incredibly moving. The names and the very young ages of the soldiers lying there, one next to the other, speak quietly of the waste of each young life, of the promises of youth never to be fulfilled. Each and every name calls up a deep sorrow. For all the words we speak on their behalf, there really are no words, because their own voices are stilled forever. Our two minutes of silence on Remembrance Day can be our symbolic acknowledgement of those young men and their collective, and most eloquent, silence. I am therefore pleased to support Mr Kells's bill and I encourage every member here today to do so as well.

More than that, I urge this House, when the vote is called at the end of this debate, to proceed directly from second to third reading of the bill. I'll tell you why. Although private members' business is a valuable forum for backbenchers and opposition members to bring forward, in an open forum, issues of particular interest to

them, we know very well that bills introduced this way have very little hope of passage. Even if they reach committee and win all-party support, private members' bills almost always die on the order paper. I have had that experience twice.

However, sometimes a bill like Mr Kells's comes along which has a simple and indisputably fine and honourable intention to which no one could object. Passage of this bill would represent a wonderful gesture of honour and respect for the best qualities that our armed forces, past and present, and the people of this country have offered to the world.

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**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** I rise to speak in support of this bill. I regret only that I can't do it with the same eloquence as Mr Kells or Mr Morin.

I've listened carefully, as I hope everybody has, to Mr Kells's rationale, his argument on behalf of this, not that a great deal of persuasion should be necessary, but it's important I suppose to understand, among other things, the origin of silence as a mode or a form of recognition.

Mr Kells is very candid and the bill is very straightforward in that it's a most unusual law. It's most unusual because it's more symbolic and it's more a plea, it's more an exhortation than it is a requirement. Mr Kells, in his bill, speaks of it as being compellable only by virtue of voluntary compliance. Obviously that contradicts compellability, but it's important.

I recall that we last addressed this issue when Mr Boushy presented a bill before the House which received the support of the House, and that was a request of a consideration that Remembrance Day become a statutory holiday. I appreciate that there were perhaps some concerns raised about that, not so much as to the intent or spirit of it but as to the practicality of it. I supported Mr Boushy's bill, as I do Mr Kells's today, and quite frankly don't share some of the concerns about Mr Boushy's bill that were expressed more privately than in the course of the debate.

Down in Niagara, down in Welland-Thorold of course we have Remembrance Day and then Decoration Day, Remembrance Day almost inevitably on a cold, slushy, damp Sunday. Those of us who might feel somewhat aggrieved by virtue of feeling compelled in our own right to stand in those cold winds on November 11 or the Sunday closest to it need only to look, as it is in Welland, at the cenotaph to our left and see the last of the last of the veterans, aging and their knuckles swollen with the infirmities of the arthritis that attacks all of us as we age, and fewer and fewer in number as well. The course of time will take from us increasingly those veterans who compel us with their memories of their fallen comrades and with their memories of their own sacrifices — and the sacrifices they make to the present, because the survivors of those wars live with the memories of the tragedy of the loss of life, with the tragedy of what were almost inevitably youngsters, children thrust into the most difficult and demanding of circumstances.

We have to recall that during the Second World War the population of all of Canada was but approximately 10 million — it was nine provinces then, because Newfoundland had its own participation, independent of the Cana-



dian forces; it wasn't yet a part of Confederation — a population of only 10 million people in this country, which from those 10 million garnered troops, forces in the three branches, that very much distinguished Canada on the world map. They consisted of people like so many of our parents, my own father, so many of my colleagues' fathers. They were part of that postwar return to small-town Ontario that when they came back struggled and began to build: build communities, build factories, build economies, build a prosperity for their children.

When I attend those ceremonies in Welland or Thorold or Port Robinson or Pelham, I look first to the smaller and smaller numbers of veterans and then I look inevitably to the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides and Air Cadets and Navy Cadets and Army Cadets; again, youngsters who, and I'm impressed by this, in increasing numbers have built a great commitment to participation in Remembrance Day ceremonies.

I'm sure I'm not alone: When one has an opportunity to address the participants, one of the things that it's necessary, I feel, to remind the participants of is that the responsibility for remembering, for commemorating and for celebrating the courage and the sacrifice of members of our armed forces falls increasingly upon those young people, because the old vets simply aren't there any more.

Jules Beauchamp, a member of the Welland Legion, a fixture at those Remembrance Day ceremonies, as he got older couldn't march any more and had to use his canes. The sad thing is, I still look to where he used to stand in front of the cenotaph, not able to participate in the ritual, in the ceremony, but always there. Well, he's not there any more, but inevitably, as we march into the compound, I look to my right where Jules should have been with his wife. We've lost Jules; we've lost so many others.

I've attended far too many funerals over the course of the last several years where I've witnessed the ribbons across the left breast of the deceased, where I've seen the photographs mounted in commemoration of military service. Again, when you look at the photographs of young and healthy and bright-eyed men and women and then you look down to the worn and sometimes tired face of an old-timer, that encourages us to reflect on who it is who fights wars. It's the youngest and inevitably the best.

One has as well to reflect on the selflessness particularly of Canadians in their involvement in the two world wars and in Korea. Canada has been blessed because for over 150 years — perhaps a little longer, of course; I was trying to calculate 1812 versus 1997, over a century and a half since Canada has entertained combat on its soil.

So we're talking as well about young people, and again we have to acknowledge the Canadians who served in other conflicts, who served in Vietnam. We're beyond the point of debating the appropriateness. The fact is that young people again felt compelled, driven by any number of things, but inevitably by a courage and a commitment, to serve in these conflicts as well as up to the present, where Canadians perform a valuable and highly lauded service internationally and are recognized. Notwithstanding what the occasional criticism might be, the fact remains that Canadians remain a highly regarded peace-

keeping force internationally and have acquired an international respect because of it.

1130

There's no secret about why, when you're in any number of places in the world, Holland, for instance, the identification of yourself as a Canadian will bring with it an incredible generosity of spirit and accommodation, why one can travel as a Canadian to any number of places in the world where, by and large, westerners, North Americans, aren't perceived in a particularly generous light, but once one identifies oneself as a Canadian — I've used that Canadian passport myself, and I know others have, as almost an amulet, because proffering that by way of identification is responded to with the greatest of generosity and goodwill. That goodwill and generosity in response to us as Canadians, I'm convinced, was won and earned in no small part by participants, young Canadians, in the military interventions in the tyranny of Hitler's capture of most of Europe, in the oppression and tragedy of that totalitarianism.

So I want to indicate strong support for this bill. It's one that says so much in such a compact way. But it's important as well as new generations mature and, as I say, as the veterans become fewer and fewer in numbers, that there be some official recognition, encouragement, endorsement of the need for new generations to continue to remember the sacrifice of their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents and to understand that those people were but their age, youngsters, when they were motivated, indeed felt compelled, to make the sacrifices and pay the supreme sacrifice as so many did.

I can indicate to Mr Kells, and I anticipate passage of the bill, that if he were to seek unanimous consent for the bill to go directly to third reading — now, Mr Kells may feel obliged to put this before committee. I've read the bill; clearly others have. The bill is extremely carefully prepared. If there's a need down the road, if there's a wish or a desire to expand the scope of the bill, that can be done by way of new bills amending this bill. I simply tell Mr Kells that if he were to move and seek unanimous consent to send this bill directly to third reading, and I understand unanimous consent would permit that, rather than referral to a committee, he won't receive anything but support from this side. I'm confident I speak for all the members of my caucus and, I trust, our colleagues in the official opposition.

I suppose I regret that the bill is advisory only or relies on voluntary compliance. I appreciate that one of the arguments against making Remembrance Day a statutory holiday is, for instance, that if you have young people in their classrooms in their schools, you can then utilize the day to conduct programs.

I was down with our federal member, Gilbert Parent, and a whole lot of leaders in the community — the mayor, Dick Reuter, and some city councillors — at a joint celebration over at the Sacred Heart Church last Remembrance Day for our francophone students, elementary school students. These young people, through their presentations and their murals — they did skits, they did recitations of any number of poems and prose — displayed a remarkable cognition, understanding, of these important parts of our Canadian history and world history.



I suppose the only concern, and this is clearly not in the scope of this bill, is that there would be in response to this bill some very clear policies developed within various ministries, including education, including ministries that might have control over public workplaces, to set out appropriate periods, not just of remembrance, as this bill suggests, but to compound that — and there's reference to that in the bill, in the ways Mr Kells suggests that the bill might be given effect to — to provide for programs to deal with specific issues in response to the need to remember the sacrifice of these great Canadian women and men.

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** Before I address the House on this bill, let me first congratulate my colleague the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore for bringing forth this legislation. I believe it extremely important legislation.

The issue before us today has been a very important one for me personally. Remembering our fallen soldiers is something that many of us tend to take for granted. I'm honoured and proud to stand in this House and speak to such a special piece of legislation that relates to freedom — freedom for a nation and its people, freedom given and preserved for us by our veterans.

For as long as there has been war, there have been many ways of honouring those who fought for peace. In many parts of the world November 11 has become a very important day since the end of the First World War in 1918. The following year, 1919, marked the first observance of the armistice. All countries involved in the war recognized three minutes of silence to honour those who gave the most precious sacrifice of all, one's life.

As a small boy, I remember my father coming home from the Petawawa camp and talking and telling my mother about the young men he once trained who were returning home from the Second World War without limbs, without eyesight or suffering from shell-shock and other mental disorders. He knew of many young, strong, vibrant men and women who had their entire lives still ahead of them who were returning from war-ravaged Europe in a state of mindless confusion and emotional turmoil. He also witnessed the pain and anguish suffered by friends who were not fortunate enough to see their loved ones return home.

The communities both at home and abroad witnessed the loss of many great people — many factory workers, farmers, fishermen, merchants, both male and female, and worst of all, the children. My own community was no exception.

In a passage entitled *We Must Work for Peace*, we read of some children who had just learned of the death of their father. Let me quote:

"After the surrender, we thought of nothing but father's return. How we longed for news of him. In 1945, great-grandfather died and there was no one to look after the house. The workers had to take turn staying home. Still no word from father. Then in the autumn of 1947, two years after the surrender, a telegram came. It told us that father was dead. He died for nothing. We were angry, but we did not know with whom. Our hearts were filled with hatred. We only knew that our father had been taken away from us for nothing."

1140

My friends, these are the words and the emotions of the living, words that must not be forgotten, words that will never be forgotten with the passage of this bill today. As the explanatory note of this bill indicates, it will declare that we will observe two minutes of silence at 11 am on Remembrance Day in honour of those who died in war and in peacekeeping missions.

The intentions of this act will be achieved through voluntary observance and through our collective desire to remember. Some may ask how this differs from what we currently do on Remembrance Day.

I believe it is appropriate to officially recognize two minutes of silence in this Legislature. This would be the least we can do to honour the sacrifices made by the great men and women of this country and indeed this province. When we consider that in a year there are 525,600 minutes, I do not believe that taking two minutes out of one's day once a year to remember the sacrifices of others is asking too much.

It is worth noting that the two minutes of silence being called for is not only to ponder our fallen heroes in the First and Second World Wars and the Korean conflict but it is also a time to remember those men and women who are sacrificing their lives as we speak to preserve the principles of freedom and democracy, principles that we, as legislators, should hold close to our hearts and our souls. If it was not for the efforts and the sacrifices made in the past, this very chamber we occupy on behalf of the people of this province would not exist.

As we read our newspapers and watch our televisions, we are exposed to a great number of world conflicts, conflicts where the aggressors are attempting to circumvent many of the fundamental freedoms and principles that our fallen soldiers fought so gallantly to preserve and defend.

In a world that cannot afford to have another major global conflict, it is imperative that we educate the young people in our society as to the evils of our past, a past that stripped many young people of their innocence and their future, a past that left people carrying with them forever the grief and sorrow of losing a loved one to war.

I encourage all members of this democratic House to support the bill before us today, a bill that will ensure that we never, ever will forget. If we forget our past, then we as a society are destined to repeat it, which is something none of us can afford.

**Mr Gary L. Leadston (Kitchener-Wilmot):** As an associate member of the Royal Canadian Legion, I rise with honour to support Mr Kells's bill to observe two minutes of silence on Remembrance Day.

I'd like to take you back to the first Remembrance Day. On November 6, 1919, Sir George Foster, the acting Prime Minister of Canada, rose in the House of Commons to read a message from King George V addressed to all the peoples of the empire. It read:

"To all my people:

"Tuesday next, November 11, is the first anniversary of the armistice which stayed the worldwide carnage of the four preceding years and marked the victory of rights and freedom. I believe that my people in every part of the empire wish to perpetuate the memory of that great



deliverance and of those who laid down their lives to achieve it.

"To afford an opportunity for the universal expression of this feeling it is my desire and hope that at the hour when the armistice came into force, the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, there may be for the brief space of two minutes a complete suspension of all our normal activities. During that time, except in the rare cases where this might be impracticable, all work, all sound and all locomotion should cease, so that in perfect stillness the thoughts of everyone may be concentrated on the reverent remembrance of the glorious dead."

Those words by the King, his wishes, were duly observed throughout Canada. Across the country at 11 am local time, businesses, factories, offices, legislatures and even traffic came to a stop for two minutes of silence.

During the war to end all wars a young surgeon, a young soldier from the city of Guelph, my home town, expressed more eloquently than I or anyone in this Legislature could possibly express the emotions of war and his desires for peace and to remember. Colonel John McCrae wrote *In Flanders Fields*. Many of us recited this poem as young men and women. Today I'm not sure the same commitment rests with our young people in our educational system. I'd like to take a moment to read Colonel John McCrae's poem, *In Flanders Fields*:

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.  
We are the dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.  
Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.

I support Mr Kells' bill. I quote again: "If ye break faith with us who die / We shall not sleep, though poppies grow / In Flanders Fields."

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Whenever we have a resolution of this kind, or a discussion of Remembrance Day and those who made the supreme sacrifice on behalf of those of us who are here today, you find a consensus in this House that you don't often see. In my experience over 20 years in this House, I have seen one day where we can always count upon the members of all three parties speaking in one accord, speaking with one voice, and that is when we pay tribute to those who have made that sacrifice.

My colleague M. Morin, who speaks on behalf of the Liberal Party, certainly in the latter years when he has been in the House has spoken eloquently, as have representatives of the Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party. It's particularly true of those who have had a personal experience serving in our armed forces in times of conflict.

Indeed, I remember speaking to the Port Dalhousie Legion not that long ago in St Catharines and I used as the basis of my speech, almost the entire speech, the words of the three representatives of the political parties in the House, including M. Morin. It was rather moving. The people in the audience were very impressed that, first of all, we had unanimity in the House on an issue because they often see conflict. That's what they see when they turn on their television sets or read their newspapers or listen to the radio. They were quite intrigued that there would be unanimity and that the members were speaking essentially from the same book.

It's because all of us, regardless of our political affiliations or experience in life or politics, are eternally thankful for those who made that sacrifice. The member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore has, I think, captured that very well in this particular bill, because he suggested some very reasonable and concrete ways in which we can pay tribute and remember those individuals who have made that sacrifice, and even those who have served and are yet with us.

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I know that our legions, our veterans' associations and others who work on this will be thankful for this particular bill. I want to pay tribute at this time to those people, to our veterans' associations, to our legions, who spend so much time helping others to remember.

I've always found it an important and moving and emotional ceremony going to the cenotaph at the appropriate time. Of course in most cases it's November 11 at 11 am, but there are other times where we remember as well. The member has mentioned ways we can do so on a voluntary basis, which is quite reasonable. The Remembrance Day service at the war memorial or cenotaph is so important, and I think it's great to see the kids coming from the various schools, along with their teachers, to be present to see that ceremony. Because time has passed us so often, our veterans from the First World War do not exist in great numbers today and many are unable to make it to the cenotaph. Our veterans from the Second World War are now people pretty well into their 70s and older, and we have people from the Korean conflict and other conflicts who are there.

I think the suggestions that are made, for instance, pulling our vehicles to the side of the road and sitting quietly just for that two minutes, announcing silence on the public address system in places of business and institutions, gathering in common areas our places of business or institutions and briefly, where it's practical — I know the member means shutting down assembly lines where it's practical to do so for that two minutes.

Assemblies at our schools, colleges and universities are particularly important. Many of us were not around for the war or cannot remember the war as it took place, the last great wars being the Second World War and the First World War. We know from history books, we know from documentaries on television or on the radio the great sacrifice that had to be made, the difficulty of war. Very often it's glamorized in commercial television or commercial movies, but those who actually served know that there wasn't a lot of glamour, that these were very difficult times.



One thing we don't think of very often as well, because the veterans who are with us are usually people in advanced years of age, is that the people whose names appear on war memorials and cenotaphs are very young people. They are people who never had a chance to go on in life. Many of them were in their late teens, their early 20s, and never had the opportunities others had, and yet they made that sacrifice in very difficult times, in times where the outcome of the war was never really certain.

When we have an act of this kind come before the Legislature, I would be extremely surprised if we didn't have unanimous consent to this bill, and I'm confident we do have. I want to say that it's appropriate for this assembly to deal with this bill in this manner and I think all its provisions are practical, reasonable and in keeping with the reverence we have for those who have made the supreme sacrifice and have served in conflict.

**Mr Kells:** I appreciate the opportunity to wrap up the debate this morning. Actually it can hardly be called a debate. I appreciate the support from my colleagues and I particularly appreciate the words and the feelings expressed by the member for Carleton East, the member for Welland-Thorold and the member for St Catharines.

In the few minutes left to me I'd like to tell you another little anecdote that always comes to mind for me on Remembrance Day. My Aunt Violet had six boys and a daughter and when the war was on three of the boys were old enough to go to war. My cousin Carlyle, who was called Caddy, went to Italy with the army, and his younger brother Bill joined after and ended up in France — actually ended up in Holland.

Because my cousin Caddy was in the engineers when the landing took place in Normandy, he was transferred from Italy to the battlefield in Holland. He was riding down the road in a truck and there before him was his brother whom he hadn't seen for a number of years, quite by chance. You'd have to be Canadian for this to happen. There they were greeting each other, and they rolled down the hill almost into the water. That's the kind of thing I remember during the two minutes' silence.

Both of my cousins are gone now, but Caddy's widow, Margaret Drennan, watches these proceedings regularly, and I promised her today that I would mention this anecdote. I think it helps sum up the feelings we have towards the two minutes' silence.

In closing, I would like to quote again, this time from the Globe and Mail editorial page dated November 15, 1996. It's entitled "Two Minutes For The Dead," and it reads:

"There is nothing quite as expressive as silence. Britain discovered that on Monday when it stood still for two minutes to remember the war dead.

"Trains, buses and cars came to a stop. Children stood by their desks with heads bowed. Office workers took their phones off the hook. The floor of the stock exchange fell silent. TV networks turned off the sound. In a hurry-up world that leaves little for contemplation, it was a magnificent gesture of national solidarity.

"Is there any reason that Canada should not follow the example? Canadians observe Remembrance Days in many ways — in schools, at Legion halls, on Parliament Hill. But remembering together, at the same moment, all

across the country would lend the event a new force at a time when memories of war are fading. Let the Prime Minister declare that, beginning next year, Canadians from sea to sea shall observe two minutes of silence at the same time every November 11. We owe it to the dead. We owe it to the yet unborn."

In closing, I think that pretty well sums up the reasons I brought my bill forward. I'm pleased to be able to do that simply because of the timing of my being in England at the time the English reinstituted the two minutes' silence.

Personally — I have a couple of more anecdotes because I see I have another minute or so left — I was a young man during the war. I remember I was always a great newspaper reader even as a youngster, and I remember reading about the war. Every evening, with that pink Tely, we'd sit on the floor and read about it and worry about it and listen to our parents talk about it. Then we'd have, as everybody must remember, or my vintage, my era, remembers, we had those great newspaper drives to continually collect newspapers, which was part of the war effort.

Finally, if I may go back just a bit, I think back to the First World War, and there's my grandmother who has 11 children, four boys, two of them at war, isolated on a farm, no electricity, no phones, rarely seeing a newspaper and wondering daily how the boy at the front is doing.

So it seems to me that two minutes of silence once a year just to remember is something that we all should probably get back to. We can all take our own memories and think about them in those two minutes. We can all educate our children and grandchildren, and I think it would make us all better Canadians for the exercise. Again, thank you.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** We will deal first with ballot item number 59.

Mr Phillips has moved private member's notice of motion number 39. Is there any member opposed to taking a vote at this time? Is it the wish of the House that the resolution carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

We will defer the vote and there will be a bell.

## REMEMBRANCE DAY OBSERVANCE ACT, 1997

### LOI DE 1997 SUR L'OBSERVATION DU JOUR DU SOUVENIR

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** We will deal now with ballot item number 60, second reading of Bill 112, Mr Kells. Is there any person opposed to a vote being taken at this time? Mr Kells has moved second reading. Is it the wish of the House that the motion carry? It is carried. The bill should be ordered for committee of the whole.

**Mr Morley Kells (Etobicoke-Lakeshore):** Mr Speaker, I seek unanimous consent that my bill, as mentioned by the other two parties, be ordered for third reading today.



**The Acting Speaker:** Is it the wish of the House that third reading be moved for this bill? It is agreed.

Call in the members; there will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1201 to 1206.*

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Mr Phillips has moved private member's notice of motion number 39. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

### Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Curling, Alvin	Miclash, Frank
Bartolucci, Rick	Grandmaître, Bernard	Morin, Gilles E.
Bisson, Gilles	Kennedy, Gerard	Patten, Richard
Bradley, James J.	Kormos, Peter	Phillips, Gerry
Castrilli, Annamarie	Kwinter, Monte	Pupatello, Sandra
Churley, Marilyn	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	Laughren, Floyd	Wildman, Bud
Conway, Sean G.	McGuinty, Dalton	Wood, Len
Crozier, Bruce	McLeod, Lyn	

**The Acting Speaker:** All those opposed, please rise and remain standing till recognized by the Clerk.

### Nays

Arnott, Ted	Gilchrist, Steve	Parker, John L.
Baird, John R.	Grimmett, Bill	Pettit, Trevor
Barrett, Toby	Guzzo, Garry J.	Preston, Peter
Beaubien, Marcel	Hardeman, Ernie	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Brown, Jim	Hastings, John	Ross, Lillian
Carroll, Jack	Johnson, Ron	Sampson, Rob
Chudleigh, Ted	Jordan, W. Leo	Sheehan, Frank
Doyle, Ed	Kells, Morley	Spina, Joseph
Elliott, Brenda	Leadston, Gary L.	Stewart, R. Gary
Ford, Douglas B.	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tascona, Joseph N.
Fox, Gary	Munro, Julia	Wood, Bob
Froese, Tom	Murdoch, Bill	Young, Terence H.
Galt, Doug	O'Toole, John	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 26; the nays are 38.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare the resolution lost. It being after 12, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 o'clock this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1209 to 1332.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### MODEL PARLIAMENT

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** Tomorrow in this Legislative Assembly there will be a model Parliament. For the first time the three official political parties of Ontario youth sections are participating: the Ontario New Democratic Youth, the Young Liberals of Ontario and the Young Progressive Conservative youth.

These young people will be sitting in the House together debating three bills, a question period and members' statements. The three bills these young people will

be debating are workfare, tax cuts and labour. This model Parliament is a great opportunity for all young people to participate in the democratic process of this province.

It is interesting to note that the Conservatives will be in power one more time. The Conservative government received 66 seats, the official opposition Liberals received 35 and the third party, the NDP, received 29. MPP Ron Johnson, the member for Brantford, will be the Speaker for the day.

The NDP youth have selected Louise James as their leader, Wynn Hartviksen as House leader and David M. Lyons as their whip.

Much work has been put into this by all members of all three parties to make sure the day will be serious but fun. I would especially like to commend Alex Ng, James McAughey, David M. Lyons and Alex Johnson for their hard work. They are with us in the gallery today.

It's great to see so many young people of this province getting involved with politics to make this a better place to live. I wish them all good luck, but particularly the NDP in defeating all the government bills tomorrow.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I request unanimous consent to revert to the Liberal Party this afternoon since we missed our first turn going around.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I can seek unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent to revert back and allow the Liberals to take their turn?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I hear a no.

### SIMON JONCAS

**Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West):** January 23 was a special day in the life of a very special person in my riding. You see, on that day, Mr Simon Joncas celebrated his 100th birthday.

Mr Joncas was born on January 23, 1897, near the town of Waubashene, Ontario. He and his two brothers fought hard for their country during the First World War. After the First World War, he became a pilot on the Great Lakes. He then went on to begin his own business in laying hardwood floors and laid the floor in the historic Right House building in Hamilton.

But his real passion is the game of bridge. At the age of 11, Mr Joncas began to play bridge, and it has become a daily occurrence for him. For those of you in this House who play the game, you will understand that it is not an easy game, it is one that commands you keep your wits about you, so to be an expert in the game is not easy, but to be an expert in the game at 100 is truly amazing.

I met Mr Joncas last week at a special party to celebrate his birthday. Mr Joncas, better known as Jim, is an extremely intelligent, witty and charming gentleman. The room at Sackville Hill was full of well-wishers and friends who have a great deal of respect and love for this truly fine gentleman. I wish to add my name to the list of well-wishers and I look forward to celebrating his 103rd birthday in the year 2000. Happy birthday, Jim.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member for St Catharines made



a point that the Liberal Party had not been given the appropriate allocation of time for a question and I was seen to have voted opposed to that. I would withdraw that and propose unanimous agreement that they be given their opportunity.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is there unanimous consent to allow the Liberals to take the turn they missed? Agreed.

#### LLOYD PERRY

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** It is with great sadness that I stand to recognize the recent passing of Mr Lloyd Perry, QC, a great Canadian and a dedicated Ontarian, a prominent member of the black community, a respected community activist and a personal friend. Lloyd Perry passed away January 8, at the age of 77, after a long and distinguished career.

Born in Halifax in 1919, he graduated from the University of Michigan in 1940. He served in the Royal Canadian Air Force in the early 1940s and graduated from Osgoode Hall in 1950. He then joined the legal staff of the official guardian and rose to be the official guardian, where he served from 1975 to 1985. He was responsible for the legal wellbeing of children and of persons with disabilities, having to act as an advocate, investigator and counsel for their best interests.

He received several appointments over the years to committees, serving on War Amps Thalidomide Task Force, as an executive member of the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and as co-chair of the NATO Advisory Board Commission on Social Issues. He lectured around the world on legal matters related to children and civil rights. As well, he often sent submissions on behalf of minorities and other disadvantaged groups to the United Nations Human Rights Commission. He was also active in furthering the diplomatic interests of Caribbean and African countries in Toronto.

Mr Perry was involved in the African Methodist Episcopal Church and was an active member of the parish. He will be remembered at a memorial service on Saturday. My condolences to his wife, Margo, his daughter, Kathy, son, Ian and sister, Inez.

#### EDUCATION FINANCING

**Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview):** I have in my hands just a few of the hundreds of letters, cards and petitions that people in my riding have been sending, parents who are concerned about education. I can assure you that although these people live in Downsview, they represent the views of parents all across the province, parents that the Minister of Education is refusing to hear.

These concerned parents are appealing to the minister to stop the cuts, as they say. If I may quote, "Your government is hurting our children today and endangering their tomorrow." They request at the very least that the government halt all further cuts to education and allow the people of Ontario to suggest alternative methods for education reform.

Surely a government that has often publicly claimed to listen to the taxpayers must agree that more input to those

who are using the system is absolutely essential. These parents recognize that their children must have the best possible education in order to be able to compete in Canada and internationally. That requires a government's policies that are founded on excellence, not the kind we have seen that have adversely affected the classroom environment. The parents of Ontario are not prepared to tolerate the erosion of the education system in Ontario.

I hope the minister will read all these letters, listen to what the parents have to say and answer each one individually.

1340

#### ROAD MAINTENANCE

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** As we speak, my constituency office is getting telephone calls from concerned citizens around the cities of Timmins and Iroquois Falls and Matheson about the condition of our northern highways. For upwards of a week or two now Highways 11 and 101 have been in such a state that many accidents have happened, many cars have ended up in the ditch because the Ministry of Transportation, for whatever reason, has decided to cut back on the winter maintenance budget and in addition to that is sending out the proper amount of equipment to maintain our highways to the standard that is needed for citizens of that area to be able to commute within the city and around the northeastern part of the province.

I hear people as they call my office and when I'm talking back to them and they really wonder if this government cares. Does this government care if people in the north have to go at risk strictly because they have to drive from one community to another? I was talking to Mayor Graham of the town of Iroquois Falls just yesterday and again today. He is also being flooded by phone calls from citizens in his community in Iroquois Falls with the same kinds of complaints.

How many more citizens will have to be put at risk, merely because they decide they need to drive on a highway, just because this government refuses to put the money that is needed to keep our highways to a proper maintenance standard? I say to this government and specifically to the Minister of Transportation, get off your high horse, do the job you were elected to do and make sure our highways are properly maintained so citizens of northern Ontario are not at risk every time they have to go on a highway.

#### THISTLETOWN SENIORS

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale):** I rise in the House today to welcome, on behalf of my colleagues, the Thistletown Seniors 55+ group from my riding who are sitting in the members' and public galleries. This fine group of senior citizens is very active in improving the quality of life for all Etobicokeans through its efforts in fund-raising ventures and volunteerism.

Some examples of their many fine contributions are the Meals on Wheels program; driving for day centre and visiting services; the Woodchuckers group, who make excellent wooden toys for our younger set; and most



recently the packing and delivery of 353 food baskets for needy families in northern Etobicoke this past Christmas.

Having dined with them downstairs earlier today, I can tell you that Etobicoke maintains its reputation as a desired place in which to live, thanks to the hard work these many seniors have given to their community throughout the years.

I ask all members of this House to join with me in welcoming the Thistleton Seniors 55+ group to the Legislative Assembly today.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** In recent times it has become very clear that the Ministry of Health has created chaos with respect to health care in this province. All their initiatives with respect to doctors have had to be reversed over the past year at an incredible cost. The provision of and responsibility for long-term care and public health have been downloaded on to municipalities, there's a reckless program of hospital restructuring that's been started without any sense of direction or destination and seniors and social assistance recipients have been made to pay for prescription drugs despite endless promises by this government about no new user fees. There is no evidence of any kind anywhere which shows that the actions of this government are resulting in any improvements to the health care system. In fact just the opposite is true.

Two days ago this government was told by Justice Dubin that the Ministry of Health was groundless in its efforts to take away liability coverage for doctors. We've paid a big price for this mistake. More important, patients have paid the biggest price. The government's decision to deny doctors financial assistance to deal with their liability for malpractice premiums meant a crisis in the health care system: Services were being withdrawn when doctors refused to take on new patients, obstetricians in places like Toronto and Windsor stopped delivering babies and so on. These actions put an individual's right to quality health care at risk. The ministry has to accept responsibility for this and the part-time minister we have now has to stand up and tell us the cost of the doctors' deal, that the \$42 million that Dubin added to will be paid —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** With all the attention, and rightly so, placed on the megacity issue here in Toronto and the downloading on to municipalities, the government might think for a minute that the workers of this province have forgotten the attack they've been facing from this government from the beginning. As much as people are now beginning to see the undemocratic nature of this government in the issues I've just mentioned, workers have faced the wrath of this government from day one, particularly in the area of health and safety.

We continue, for instance, to demand that there be an inquest into the two deaths at Dofasco that shouldn't have happened and so far the Minister of Labour has refused

to respond. What else has this government already done? Bill 15 has been passed, where they ripped away the right of workers to have an equal say on the Workers' Compensation Board. They've already killed the Workers' Health and Safety Agency. Why? Because they had 50% representatives on the board. This government can't stand workers to dare be thinking that they should be anywhere other than under the thumb of their friends.

You've cut the costs, cut money, to the Workers' Health and Safety Centre, the centre that provides training on health and safety. Workers training workers: It works. You don't like it. You've cut it.

Your Red Tape Review Commission, tabled just the other day, said very clearly that this government intends to water down the right to refuse unsafe work. Bill 99, your WCB attack on injured workers, takes \$6 billion and gives it to your friends.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

#### WINTER CARNIVALS

**Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** During the upcoming month I'll have the opportunity to participate in many different winter carnivals in my riding. I believe it is the strong community involvement which makes these carnivals such a success.

Tourists come from all over North America to Muskoka-Georgian Bay during the winter season, making this area a year-round attraction. Each year the growth of cold-weather tourism activities mounts, attracting skiers, snowmobilers, fishing enthusiasts and resort patrons.

I'm looking forward to attending the Snowarama in Gravenhurst this Saturday, to welcome the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, the Honourable Hilary Weston, at its opening. Snowarama is a large tourism event in Gravenhurst, which raises funds for the Easter Seal Society, with snowmobilers collecting pledges on a 100-mile ride around Lake Muskoka.

In addition to last week's Midland Winter Carnival, other winter festivals in my riding that Ontarians will want to attend are the Winterfest in Huntsville this coming weekend, the winter carnivals in Bracebridge and Port Carling on the weekend of February 8 and 9, the 49th annual Penetanguishene Winterama, the Dorset Snowball Winter Carnival on February 14 and 15 and the St Patrick's Winter Carnival on the weekend of February 22 in Dwight.

I hope all Ontarians have the opportunity this winter to visit Muskoka-Georgian Bay and enjoy these treasures of the winter season. By the way, we have lots of snow.

#### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

##### TEACHERS' LABOUR DISPUTE

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** Mr Speaker, I rise today to inform you somewhat sadly that following question period today I intend to introduce legislation to send secondary school teachers of the Lennox and Addington County Board of Education back to work. The legislation proposes an



arbitrated end to the dispute between teachers and the board.

Earlier this week I wrote to both the board and representatives of the striking secondary school teachers urging them to come to an agreement. They were unable to do so.

Over the past weeks the board and teachers were provided with assistance by the Education Relations Commission to help them resolve their differences. Yesterday I was informed by the Education Relations Commission that the school year of students would be in jeopardy if the strike continued. Therefore, I am taking immediate action and will be introducing legislation to end the dispute.

Today marks the 29th school day lost to the 2,509 students of the Lennox and Addington secondary schools. Contract disputes also disrupted students' studies in Lennox and Addington in 1986 and 1993-94.

Across Ontario there have been 11 other job actions this year which have disrupted students' studies. Over the past 20 years, 17 million student days have been lost to job action. It's unacceptable that students and their parents are caught in the middle of these disputes. Last fall, Leon Paroian reported that these disputes have had a negative impact on students' learning. I am now in the process of reviewing legislation to achieve the right balance between the right to strike and the rights of children to an education.

Today I am asking the Legislature to join me to help the students of Lennox and Addington. I ask all members to recall the proud record of this chamber in dealing with these issues in the past and to give this legislation quick approval.

1350

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** We will be most interested in seeing the legislation actually tabled so that we can look at the specifics of the legislation that the minister intends to introduce. Quite clearly, it would not be appropriate to go too far in terms of the specifics of the legislation until we've been able to see it.

I would say that it has been the history of our caucus to support back-to-work legislation when the Education Relations Commission makes a finding that students' education is in jeopardy. That's a principle to which we have always applied ourselves, both in government and in opposition, and that principle will remain a very strong one for us.

Having said that, I have some concerns about the entire climate in which the collective bargaining process is taking place in Ontario today and in which this announcement is being made. I need to take a moment of my five minutes to indicate why the process of the Education Relations Commission's involvement is so critical to the entire operation of collective bargaining in Ontario.

The Education Relations Commission was put in place when Bill 100, which established a reasonable forum for collective bargaining, was put in place. That commission was established in order to create an independent, arm's-length, apolitical body that would have as its concern, firstly, to make sure that the collective bargaining process went smoothly, but secondly, and perhaps paramount, to ensure that students were not in jeopardy. It was very

clear to the government of the day, a Conservative government that established that legislation, that put the Education Relations Commission in place, as it has been to successive governments, that the Education Relations Commission was the body through which the whole process could be depoliticized, where government would not have to make political decisions on behalf of one party or the other, nor would they have to weigh the wellbeing of students against the whole collective bargaining process. That task, that responsibility, was assigned to this arm's-length body, the Education Relations Commission.

I'm not going to go any further in a history lesson today in terms of reviewing how well that's worked or how well that hasn't worked, other than to again say that the recommendations of the Education Relations Commission have always been the basis in government and in opposition for our ability to determine whether students' wellbeing was in jeopardy.

I am concerned to see the legislation because I am concerned to see whether in fact due process is being followed with this legislation today. The concern arises for me, and perhaps it's the first time I've had to express this concern, for a couple of reasons. One is because the Minister of Education and Training this week has been publicly talking about his dissatisfaction with the process, his intention to review the process to bring in changes, speculating on that at a time when there has not really been an opportunity for public debate or any clarity from the minister as to what his position will be. Our concern will be to see whether the legislation holds to the principles established in Bill 100 that set out due process.

I'm concerned too because the very operation of the Education Relations Commission is today, this afternoon, itself in jeopardy. It is our understanding that as of tomorrow the Education Relations Commission will no longer be able to function, whether in the resolution of this dispute or in the resolution of any of the disputes which are currently going on in collective bargaining between boards and teachers, because the Education Relations Commission will not have a quorum. Unless the minister is also prepared to announce today that there will be new appointments to the Education Relations Commission so that that essential, arm's-length, independent body can continue to mediate the collective bargaining situation, can continue to recommend to this minister and this government when students' wellbeing is jeopardized by the continuance of a strike, we will have a very serious, chaotic situation on our hands.

Lastly, I want to express my concern that the Minister of Education's goal so clearly is to take over not only educational funding but the management of education, with the goal of being able to make major cuts in education. I can't help but have some additional concerns about what would normally be a due process of support for back-to-work legislation on a finding of student jeopardy. I can't help but feel that that due process may be compromised by this minister's agenda on the whole aspect of making major cuts in education.

Having said that, we will look forward to seeing the legislation itself and to being able to debate it more fully at the appropriate time.



**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I think all members in this House agree that a strike or lockout in the education system does not benefit anyone and that it certainly puts the students in a very difficult position: caught in the middle.

When we look at this Lennox-Addington dispute, I think it's important to recognize that the Education Relations Commission has acted under its mandate and made a recommendation to the minister, dated yesterday, that the continuation of the dispute would lead to jeopardy for the students.

I think it's important to recognize that in the letter that was sent to the minister by the ERC, on pages 4, 5 and 6 it sets out the history of this particular negotiation. In that, it points out that the teachers have filed a complaint with the ERC alleging the board has breached its statutory duty to bargain in good faith.

The board unilaterally imposed some changes prior to the time that is allowed under the Education Act; under Bill 100 as well. The teachers grieved this and the arbitrator ruled in the teachers' favour. However, the teachers maintain the board has failed to implement the terms of the arbitrator's award. The board has also unilaterally changed some terms and conditions within the time frame contemplated by the act. The ERC says:

"While this may be a legitimate exercise of rights available to a board, the timing and nature of the changes in the midst of mediation have placed barriers to achieving a resolution. Further, there have been public statements of distrust and disrespect on the part of both parties. It appears that both parties in this particular dispute have not acted in a way that would facilitate a negotiated agreement."

For that reason, the ERC made a recommendation to the minister that legislation be brought in.

I think it's significant that we look at what the ERC recommended in terms of legislation. They recommended, "The collective agreement that expired on August 31, 1996, shall be deemed to continue in force until replaced by a new collective agreement reached by the parties or awarded by a board of arbitration."

The draft legislation that has been shared with us does indeed do that, but it also imposes the rollbacks the ERC has referred to in its letter. The board of education in this case got rid of department heads, a total of 44 people, and even after the OSSTF won the arbitration, the board refused to reinstate these people. It finally did give back pay, but subsequently the 60-day rule was in place so they did not make any changes. The board got rid of other positions, rolled back salaries 2.8% and forced the teachers to pay 20% of their benefits, and significantly for the students in this particular board, the board changed the pupil-teacher ratio to 16.7 pupils per teacher and fired three teachers. This move affected the timetables of 21 other teachers.

It seems we have a situation where we are talking about rollbacks that not only affected the teachers and their jobs but affected the students in the classrooms. It would be most unfortunate, in trying to resolve this dispute upon the recommendation of the ERC, if the government instituted legislation that would keep in place

those rollbacks that adversely affected the students in this particular board.

I'm hoping that when we see the final legislation it does not include the provision that institutes the rollbacks, because if it does include that, it will be unfortunately impossible for us to agree to one-day passage in dealing with this legislation. If the minister has withdrawn that section, then we would consider agreeing to dealing with the legislation today.

The other point that is of significance is that although the ERC recommended that an arbitration be set up under the aegis of the ERC, the legislation says the arbitrator will be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council; in other words, the minister. This is unprecedented, unless you go back, apparently, to Kirkland Lake in 1976, which is 20 years ago, not long after Bill 100 had been passed in the first place.

The last number of arbitrations in this case have been under the aegis of the ERC. I hope the minister —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you, member for Algoma.

1400

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### SOCIAL, COMMUNITY HEALTH AND HOUSING SERVICES

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My first question is to the Premier. Premier, you have had some studies done which detail in some measure the impact of your mega-week policies on communities throughout the province. That information would be very important, is very important, to us and the communities right across the province so they can gain a better understanding of what the impacts of the mega-week policies are going to be.

This morning in this House you used your majority to defeat a resolution put forward by one of our members that would have required that you provide us with the information contained within those studies. For some reason you have now determined that those studies are to be secret, and the only conclusion we can draw is that the reason you're not going to release those studies is because they do not support the case you make, the case that would have us believe the property taxes are going to come down by some 10% in this province and that there's a good case somehow to be made for transferring social services from the provincial level down to municipalities.

Premier, I'm giving you an opportunity now to prove me wrong by producing those studies by the end of today. Show that I am mistaken in this regard and those studies do in fact —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** We are releasing information as it becomes available. I think we have indicated to the House and to you and to our partners, municipalities and school boards, that we're trying to get as detailed impacts as we can with regard to how much education will come off the property tax in each individual case and the same with welfare benefits that were



there. At the same time some municipalities will have to deal with policing and some will not; some will have to deal with farm tax rebates and some will not.

What we can tell you is that overall those numbers are certainly there, and overall we would expect — contrary to when your party was in power, when taxes mushroomed, when you downloaded on municipalities — that by the year 2000, which is when we hope to have these all implemented, that property taxes would be neutral, or in some cases perhaps reductions.

**Mr McGuinty:** You believe in hiding the best possible information and I believe in bringing it out. That's why we started a fact-finding tour to bring to the fore, to bring to the public attention and our attention the best possible information we can gather. That's the kind of study, the kind of undertaking, you should have followed prior to entering on your mega-week madness.

Let me tell you what we found out yesterday. The Ontario senior citizens' coalition told us this yesterday: They called your dumping of services "contemptible." They said you're already hitting them with user fees for prescription drugs. They said you're already charging them \$40.29 a day for staying in hospital. They said you're reducing food services and nutritional standards in their nursing homes. They asked why, at a time when the number of frail, elderly Ontarians is on the rise, you are bent on proceeding with a plan which is going to reduce and put at risk the number of services they have to rely upon.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I hope you reassured them, as we reassure them, that what we are doing will enhance services for seniors, will enhance services for long-term care, will enhance those services. I would suggest to you that if you allowed that viewpoint, which is obviously wrong from the government, to go unchecked — I would expect you, in these hearings, to speak on behalf of the motives of the government, which are entirely contrary to that. I now call on you to make sure you're not misrepresenting what the government is doing, either in motive or in fact.

**Mr McGuinty:** I undertook on behalf of those seniors to obtain the best possible information. I asked you for the studies that you've got, that you're hiding, and you're not prepared to release them, so how can I provide them with that reassurance?

Let me tell you what else they said. They said that not only are you killing off protections for seniors who live in apartments, you're now about to kill off the very apartments themselves. That's what's going to happen when you transfer the responsibility for public housing on to municipalities that not only cannot afford to maintain existing stock, they can hardly expect to be called upon to construct new stock.

Premier, you've had one heck of a week. That I will allow you. The seniors are calling your actions contemptible; the board of trade says you're raising taxes by \$7,900; the Canadian Taxpayers Federation says you're running a shell game; and David Crombie says your actions are "absolutely the wrong thing to do."

Your response is to say: "No one out there really understands what we're up to. Nobody understands what we're doing. Nobody understands what the impact of

mega-week is going to be." Premier, I've got news for you: Everybody understands what's going to happen. I'm calling upon you now to go back to the drawing board.

**Hon Mr Harris:** We certainly plan to discuss with municipalities and our partners how we can make sure, from a large scale, that every region of this province has the same opportunities to reduce property taxes. As well throughout this year and in the transition period, we will be prepared to work with individual municipalities.

I've heard you and your colleagues say it's a good idea to take education off the property tax. By the year 2000 that is \$6.2 billion. You're the leader who said on November 25: "People are tired of opposition politicians who pound their fists, foam at the mouth, turn red in the face and insist that everything this government has done is wrong. It hurts their credibility." That's Dalton McGuinty, so I would ask you, Dalton McGuinty, which of the \$6.2 billion of services do you suggest that municipalities pick up?

**The Speaker:** New question.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Ottawa-Rideau, it would be helpful if you came to order. Thank you very much. Leader of the official opposition.

## PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr McGuinty:** My second question is also for the Premier. Premier, you've got to admit that the last three weeks have been a disaster for your government. It's no wonder senior members of your staff are dropping like flies, and so are your supporters. We've got the Canadian Taxpayers Federation against you now, the board of trade, David Crombie, the GTA mayors, the Toronto Sun and even the Financial Post. Can you believe it? The Financial Post.

Let's listen to what some of your Hamilton backbenchers are saying. Lillian Ross said: "It's pretty frightening. I'm concerned about it. I don't want to see it happen." Ed Doyle said: "It's got to be looked at. I'm concerned. No one wants to see the community hit. Hopefully we can find ways to mitigate the problem." Trevor Pettit said: "I have no reason to doubt the figures the locals have provided me. Our role is to speak to the ministry and see if they can't revisit the situation."

There's a simple thing to do here, Premier: Admit you've made a mistake and come back with a better plan. Will you do that today?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Of course we'll continue to consult and continue to listen. I have listened to the members from Hamilton whom you quote who are quite satisfied that at the end of the day their municipalities will be better off.

I would say this: On August 22, 1996, Dalton McGuinty in the Ottawa leadership debate said, "We've got to be careful how we're seen in opposition now because if all we ever do is oppose everything and propose nothing we're not going to win." I would ask you, given that you've accepted that it's a good idea to take \$6.2 billion off the property taxpayer for education, what you think municipalities should pay for in that \$6.2 billion.

There's your target: \$6.2 billion. If you want to be positive, if you want to come forward with suggestions,



if you want to be relevant, I suggest you come forward with your ideas.

**Mr McGuinty:** I'm really quite flattered that the Premier is taking such a keen interest in my career. I can see why he let Mr Rhodes go, though. It's obvious that the —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Government members, please.  
1410

**Mr McGuinty:** It's obvious that the Premier never lets the facts get in the way of a good spin. He thinks he can dump \$1 billion in net new costs on property taxpayers across the province and at the same time magically produce a 10% property tax cut. I'm not aware of it, but maybe Doug Henning has joined the caucus over there; I haven't seen him.

Yesterday we heard from the mayors and the Metro chair, and this is what they said: They said you're wrong. Quite simply, they said you're wrong. They said property taxes are going to skyrocket and they provided the numbers in black and white to corroborate what they're saying.

So, Mr Premier, give me your math. Explain how your magical 10% property tax decrease is possible after dumping more than \$1 billion in net new costs: factoring in all the rainy-day funds, \$1 billion in additional costs to property taxpayers across the province. Provide me with your math.

**Hon Mr Harris:** Your \$1 billion, of course, is way off, and I have to call you on that. I think you know when you talk about figures that people would say that the opposition have picked up every nickel they could possibly manufacture and somehow or other, without recognizing all the other factors that reduce the impacts, they've come up with \$1 billion.

Let me be clear —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Members of the opposition, it's important that we hear the questions and the answers, and I'm having a difficult time hearing the answers. Would you come to order, please. Thank you.

**Hon Mr Harris:** Let me be clear. We have acknowledged over the last two years, for example, that we offloaded on to municipalities about \$700 million. That was clear in the reduction in the grants to them in the first two years of our mandate. We just were up front and we said, "We'll help you deal with that." The result: property tax reductions in Mississauga; Mel Lastman hasn't had a tax hike in four or five years. So now you're saying over the next three years we're reducing \$1 billion. Well, we have another \$2.5 billion we're putting into the system in addition to that. We are helping municipalities —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. The member for Hamilton East, I ask that you withdraw that comment, please.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** I withdraw it.

**Hon Mr Harris:** We are following your advice, whether you know it or not, and I would ask you to follow it too. August 1996 press release: "Ontarians are telling us to retool government, make it more efficient,

concentrate on what it should be doing and doing it well." It's good advice, it's what we're doing, and we invite you to join us now in living up to what you say should be done.

**Mr McGuinty:** You can change a lot of things but you can't change the fact that one plus one equals two, and your math just doesn't add up. We've done our math; we've produced the numbers. Mayors across the province are doing their math; they're producing their numbers. You've got some studies and you refuse to release those. You can't talk with any credibility about our numbers being wrong unless you produce your own.

The Board of Trade of Metropolitan Toronto says business is going to face a \$7,900 tax increase based on what you are about to do. The Financial Post says your plan would "force local municipalities to cut services, raise taxes, or both."

I believe one of the biggest tests of government is to see what it does when they make a mistake. You've made a mistake. It's a big one. Here's an opportunity for you to own up to it, to backtrack, to produce the new plan, and to bring it back into this House. Will you do that?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Is it a mistake to take education off the property tax? You can't have it all ways. John Gerretsen said there's no more reason to fund education costs on the property tax roll. That's what he says; that's what you said. You've all said that these are good ideas.

If you want to talk about numbers, this is from the party who told Ontario they had a surplus and left a \$3-billion deficit. That's what you said. That's when you were there. This is from the party that not only had a \$3-billion deficit but offloaded on to municipalities such that tax increases were in the 40% range, such that tax increases in education were in the 50% to 60% range. So you don't have to talk to us about who has numbers and whose numbers add up. Your numbers didn't add up when you were in government, they didn't add up in your red book in the campaign and they don't add up now.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is also for the Premier. I want to draw the Premier's attention to a letter which is being sent out by his parliamentary assistant, the member for Brampton South. I understand it's being sent out under parliamentary assistant letterhead.

The letter makes some very questionable statements and I believe makes some very bad accusations. The member for Brampton South, in the letter and some of the attachments to it, basically says, "The mayors," referring to the mayors of Metropolitan Toronto, "decided on the question, are administering the process," and this is the referenda process, "are actively promoting and funding one side of the issue and are in charge of counting the ballots." He says, "Clearly this is not how things should be done."

Premier, I think your parliamentary assistant is implying that the mayors of Metropolitan Toronto are committing voter fraud. Don't you think you should apologize for that?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** No.



**Mr Hampton:** I'm not surprised by the answer. After all, over the last three weeks, Premier, you've shown extreme contempt for democracy. The Speaker found a *prima facie* case of contempt against one of your ministers and against your government. You've had your wrist slapped over your use of government fax machines to create a partisan faxing network —

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** And the TV ads.

**Mr Hampton:** — and your television ads. Now your communications director and spin doctor has had to move on.

I'm saying to you that I think it's very serious that you would be implying and your parliamentary assistant would be implying that the mayors of Metropolitan Toronto are somehow guilty of ballot fraud or voting fraud. I think you should apologize and I think you should remove any reference of that. Will you do that?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Let's be clear about a few things. First of all, the letter that was sent out is not on parliamentary assistant letterhead, so let's just be clear about that. Second, the letter states the facts of what the city of Toronto, I believe, is doing. I haven't read the letter, but everything you've read to me seems like the facts.

I cannot apologize for your interpretation, which seems to be the most ludicrous, ridiculous interpretation of stating the facts in a letter that I've ever heard. I mean, I used the word "silly" the other day, which is unparliamentary. This one is just simply ludicrous. If that's the way you want to interpret it, you apologize. It's not the way I interpret it, it's not the way the member interprets it and it's not the way any reasonable person would interpret it. It's a statement of the facts.

**Mr Hampton:** Premier, I'm surprised you haven't read it yet, you know so much about it. I'm sure that people will take that into account as well, that you claim you haven't read it but you know so much about it.

*Interjections.*

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** It's called Alzheimer's.

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** Nice, Janet. You'd better withdraw that. Do you want to repeat that, Janet?

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Members, I didn't hear the comment. If you want to stand up on a point of order and ask the minister to withdraw, you can, but I did not hear the comment.

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe that the Minister of Community and Social Services made an unparliamentary remark which included reference to Alzheimer's.

**The Speaker:** I didn't hear the comment and I will give the opportunity for the minister to comment.

1420

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Mr Speaker, if I said anything that was unparliamentary, if I said anything that someone could take offence from, I would like to withdraw that categorically. That was certainly not my intent.

**The Speaker:** Final supplementary.

**Mr Hampton:** Premier, here's the situation: The mayors of Metropolitan Toronto oppose your megadownload and your megacity, so your parliamentary assistant implies that they are committing voting fraud.

When opposition parties raise the issues and point out that this is not going to work, this is going to really hurt our communities, you say we know nothing. When the Toronto board of trade says this is wrong, you say they know nothing. When the United Way says this is not going to work and it's going to hurt our communities, you say they know nothing. When David Crombie, the person you appointed to head up the Who Does What panel, says this is not going to work, this is going to hurt our communities, you say he knows nothing.

It appears that the only person who knows everything in this province is you. Everybody else says you're wrong. Can you explain, Premier, how it is that you seem to know everything and everybody who disagrees with you is wrong?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Let me be clear: All the quotes that you somehow want to attribute to me are false, incorrect and allegations that quite frankly are not things that I have said. Somehow or other you put your own interpretation on things. I guess an \$11-billion deficit was a balanced budget when you were in office; I don't know. I guess 1.3 million on welfare was, "We really care about people; this is a good record."

I cannot possibly explain your interpretation of statements that are made. They are false, they are inaccurate, they are imputing motive and they are wrong. If you continue to make those statements and expect me to respond to them, all I can do is correct the record and tell you, "You are wrong."

**The Speaker:** New question, leader of the third party. *Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** The member for Ottawa-Rideau, thank you again for cooperating.

**Mr Hampton:** I would say, Premier, when everyone disagrees with you, I think you should start to listen. I think you should start to listen to some of these people who really care about our communities.

## HOMELESSNESS

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** To the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: Last Sunday Garland Sheppard, a homeless person, was found frozen to death in a Toronto garage. Today is six months after the report of a coroner's jury into the death of three Toronto homeless people. The jury recommended that an advisory committee be struck, including the representatives of all levels of government, housing providers, tenants and homeless people. This group was to come up with a strategy to ensure that homeless people have access to appropriate housing and support services funded by the appropriate government ministries.

Minister, the six months is up. Can you tell us, where is your advisory committee, where is your respect for the coroner's jury? Can you tell us where you're at, please?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** In response to the leader of the third party, I'll refer the question to the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** The opposition is quite right; we do have to respond to the coroner's recommendations and



we are certainly planning to do so. We think this is an extremely important issue and we are quite looking forward to be able to discuss this with him.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** The coroner's jury was quite clear. They said the goal should be to identify successful models of affordable and supportive housing and community supports and develop a plan. I say with regret and shame that we are witnessing the death of the Ministry of Housing.

Back to the other minister on this. I want to read you something from your party's A Blueprint for Justice and Community Safety in Ontario. On page 35 it says, "The Coroners Act should be amended to ensure the government responds to inquest jury recommendations within a reasonable time."

Does "reasonable time" mean that you disregard it completely because the six months have run out? The deadline is gone and you say you're ready to respond to this. To my knowledge, the coroner has received nothing. To my knowledge, the agencies that deal with this have received nothing from you or that ministry there that is dead. Why are you ignoring the poor, the vulnerable and the homeless?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I would first of all reject the opposition's accusation that we are ignoring this issue. That is by no means what we are doing. We are certainly concerned about the recommendations the coroner put forward. We've been considering them carefully. Some of the material is completed, some of it is not. It will be done as soon as it is complete.

I'd like to also point out that many of those recommendations that the coroner talked about highlighted the municipality's role and responsibility in this as well. That's one of the reasons we think that working with our municipal partners in solving this issue — we've seen the expertise that Toronto has demonstrated in its care for those who have been facing homelessness in the winter and we want to continue to work with them as we take a look at solving this very serious problem.

**Mr Marchese:** All I can say is God bless Toronto, because if it's up to this government to help us out, the homeless are not going to have any chances to find a place to live.

Your mega-download on services to municipalities is going to make it worse for us, not better. You're making municipalities pick up the tab for the following: welfare, hostels, homes for special care and non-profit housing. They will wind up having to sell off public housing and close hostel beds because your download makes it impossible to maintain them without big tax hikes.

The coalition that's up here dealing with homelessness wants assurances from you that you won't abandon the homeless and the vulnerable. Give them that assurance.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** We are not abandoning the homeless. One of the things the honourable member should remember when he is discussing this issue is that we are lifting the education costs off the property tax. We are also continuing to share many social programs to ensure that those supports are there for those who need them.

One of the problems that has been pointed out by coroners' juries on this kind of issue is that the complex nature of the needs of many people who find themselves

homeless sometimes involves health needs and social needs as well as housing needs. One of the problems they have faced is that because those programs are not integrated they can't get the help they need. That's one of the objectives we will achieve with the results of our Who Does What recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I'll just remind those people who are in the galleries that you're not allowed to speak out. You'll be asked to leave if you do.

## GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** My question is for the Premier. Premier, we've learned that at the same time the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario issued an \$850,000 contract to Ginkgo advertising and Hogtown Creative advertising, the government of Ontario issued a \$2-million untendered contract for advertising through the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and Training and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The process in this case, according to our information, was not followed. Management Board was asked by the ministries involved to exempt them from the regular advertising process. Basically this company that has long ties and history to your party, federally and provincially, and to you and your campaigns was given a \$2-million untendered contract by the government of Ontario for television advertising. Can you explain to the House why you believe it is appropriate for your government to give a \$2-million untendered contract for advertising to your friends?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** No, I can't, but I know that the Chair of Management Board, who is responsible for that, can.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** To be more accurate, there were contracts of \$400,000 pertaining to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Ministry of Health which went through the proper process, went through the proper Management Board process. The process contemplates situations of urgency and the process contemplates situations of confidentiality, and in those instances the proper process permits the Management Board of Cabinet to exempt the process from tendering. The proper process was followed. Management Board are satisfied that this involved urgency and confidentiality and gave the proper approval.  
1430

**Mr Agostino:** I am astonished at the answer by the minister. What you have clearly done is issued contracts to your friends and used the Management Board route as the excuse for doing that. It's very clear that the process was not followed. There is a mechanism for tendering of \$25,000 and over from ministries. Any contracts over half a million must go through the Advertising Review Board. None of this was done. The various ministries and ministers involved came to Management Board and said, "Exempt us from the rules."

The process for tendering contracts is sacred. The integrity of the tendering process is sacred. That system is there so politicians and political parties do not issue



multimillion-dollar contracts to their friends and supporters. Very clearly, the \$2-million figure involving the three ministries was provided to us by the office of the Management Board. The fact that you clearly thwarted and went around and skewed the process here is very clear. Again, will you commit to withdrawing these —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Hamilton East, come to order, please.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** You know, the member for Hamilton East and others asking questions, you get so much time to ask them. If they're not put, they're not put. Minister.

**Hon David Johnson:** Simply to reiterate — the member opposite is obviously not aware of the full process involved — the process does allow for consideration in terms of confidentiality and urgency. The Management Board went through the proper process and was satisfied. I will say further that the firm selected was one of four that had current contracts with the government and had expertise in this particular area. The other firms were fully occupied with other contracts. The \$400,000 contracts for the two ministries went through the proper process, got the proper consideration, met the requirements of the process and were approved by Management Board.

#### PESTICIDE TESTING

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** My question is for the Minister of Environment and Energy. We've been trying to tell you for some time about the threat to the environment and human health that is a clear result of your government's agenda of deregulation, privatization, funding cuts and massive layoffs at the ministry. Now we're starting to see direct fallout from that.

Because of privatization at the Ministry of Agriculture, your ministry is now going to have to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars for tests of pesticide samples at the University of Guelph. A leaked internal ministry memo dated January 28 says your ministry is going to cut testing of pesticide samples to the bone, or even completely eliminate these tests, because you don't have the money to cover the costs. Will you issue an order today, in writing, reversing those positions and will you guarantee that there will be no cuts at all to the ministry's testing of pesticide samples?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** In our drive to make government more efficient, what we are trying to do with regard to the testing of pesticides is to find the best combination of resources to do it at the best cost for the taxpayer. We are not going to in any way lessen the number of tests we are doing with pesticides. We are only going to find a better way of doing it.

**Ms Churley:** You are now on record that you will not lessen the tests, despite what this memo says. I would like to see it in writing. I would like you to prove to us in writing that you're not going to lessen the test.

This is not just a threat to the environment and human health. Farmers in Ontario know what can happen to their markets if consumers begin to lose confidence in the

safety of the food they buy. One of the options in this memo says that the farmers or the consumer or user who wants the test may have to pay for it.

This is all a result of a \$300,000 budget cut you've already made. Look how it's backfired. When you consider that budget cuts at the environment ministry already total \$200 million, and could go higher, and you fired at least 750 staff, including monitors, inspectors and well-renowned scientists, isn't it time for you to admit today that the Harris Conservative cuts will have a disastrous effect on the health of Ontarians? Tell the truth today.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** Our government took over a number of ministries which had grown exponentially in terms of their costs and expenditures over the last 10 years. The Ministry of Environment was one of those particular ministries. When the rate of inflation in this province was at 6% or 7%, the budgets of these ministries were increasing by 15% and 20%.

Therefore, our concern for the environment is no less than any of the other political parties. Our concern for the environment is even greater than that of the other political parties. We only see the waste which was put forward by the previous parties. We believe we can enforce even tougher environmental standards than were in place before with a more efficient process. That's what we're going to do, that's what we're in the process of doing and that's what we will do.

#### ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

**Mr Gary L. Leadston (Kitchener-Wilmot):** My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism. As you're aware, in the regional municipality of Waterloo we are proud to have in our home two world-famous universities, one in particular, Wilfrid Laurier University, which is perhaps one of the leading universities in the world with its business program. They've conducted an annual business outlook survey and it's reflected that we're having the highest economic confidence in business in a decade. Could you comment on that question?

**Hon William Saunderson (Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism):** I'm very pleased to respond to the member for Kitchener-Wilmot. That is a very good study. It's consistent with other studies that have been made in Ontario. It does cover the Waterloo region and the city of Guelph, I might add. What its findings show is a great deal of confidence in Ontario. It's actually approaching the highest point in confidence that we've seen in the past decade. More than 70% of the people surveyed feel that the financial picture for 1997 will be improving over the 1996 financial picture, and that was also a very good year in Ontario at last.

There are five major reasons why this confidence is showing up: the qualified and motivated labour force; the new and lower business costs as a result of our government; reduced personal taxes as a result of the government; effective deregulation, which we all know about; and finally, to sum up, a very pro-business government.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Supplementary? No?

New question, member for Fort William.



## EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** My question is for the Minister of Education. I want to pursue with you the fact that you and your government seem absolutely determined to spend thousands and thousands of dollars hiring consultants and then ignore the advice that you're given by those consultants.

An independent report that was done for you by Ernst and Young said very clearly that you should go back to the drawing board and get a better understanding of what makes education costs go up; for example, the needs of special education students. You ignored that.

A report by David Crombie said very clearly: "Do not take education off the property tax. The price you have to pay for that is too great." Your government ignored that.

You have another report from Ernst and Young that clearly expresses concern about the fact that if you amalgamate school boards, that could result in increased costs. You ignored that.

Would you please tell us why you ignored the concern of your own consultants that the amalgamation of school boards, just like the amalgamation of cities, could lead to increased costs, not savings?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** To the member opposite, very clearly we are proceeding with answering the questions that need to be answered to provide every individual student in this province with sufficient amounts of funding to guarantee a first-class education. We are doing that now.

I have a question for the member opposite. This government has taken action on the 24 major reports that have been done in my lifetime that have suggested changes to governance and changes to finance. We have changed the governance model. We have taken out — from 1,900 politicians in our education system, 700 will be remaining in our new system. We have streamlined it. We have saved money that's spent outside the classrooms that will be available for students and for their needs. We finally have a funding system now where the province has met its obligation to make sure there is high-quality education for every single student in the province. Why didn't you, when you were in government, take action on those reports?

1440

**Mrs McLeod:** Minister, I already had the answer to the question I asked you because the answer came from your ministry staff. When your own consultants expressed concerns about the fact that amalgamation of boards could drive education costs up, your ministry staff basically said, "Don't worry, because we're also going to take control of educational finance, and then we will control the cost." That's what all this is about. That's what this whole mega-dump of services on to municipalities is all about. It's your way of getting control of education funding so you can find a way to take \$1 billion out of education.

This government is prepared to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars trying to convince the public that it cares about education when in fact it keeps cutting our children's education. Our students are now 46th in per

pupil spending in the United States and Canada, and if you take another \$1 billion out of education, they'll be at the absolute bottom rung.

Minister, your goal is to take \$1 billion out of education. Will you please just tell us today where you're planning to get the \$1 billion?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** First of all the numbers are just plain, ordinary wrong. You're just plain wrong.

Second, there's a very clear reason why we are making the changes we're making to education, why we are taking the responsibility for funding education. There's a very clear reason why we are changing governance for our school structure, and that reason is this: For this government, for my colleagues and myself, it is unacceptable that the student achievement in this province is below the average of the other provinces. It is unacceptable and we need to make changes so that our legacy won't be your legacy, which is lower student achievement and higher costs. We're going to reverse that.

## HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** I have a question for the Minister of Health. In December in Sudbury, when the Health Services Restructuring Commission presented its report on the restructuring of the hospital system there, I and my colleague from Sudbury East asked you to come to Sudbury to meet with local community leaders to discuss some of their concerns about that restructuring. Now the two facilitators who were appointed to resolve some of the mechanics of shifting from a three-hospital system to one hospital have packed their bags, they've left town, thrown up their hands because they can't resolve the differences with the Sudbury General Hospital.

My question to you is: Given how serious this problem is, will you now come to Sudbury and meet with the local leaders and the district health council so that we can move towards a sole governance model, which I think most of the people in the community support?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** I know that the two mediators have expressed disappointment in not being able to come to a resolution of this matter, but I'm unaware of their final report. Their final report goes back to the restructuring commission, and I think it behooves us to allow that process to unfold, that their final report would go to the restructuring commission, and I'm sure I would be advised by the restructuring commission in due course of the situation. The restructuring commission has made recommendations in the Sudbury community. I hope that through the efforts of the restructuring commission this issue will be resolved.

There is also, I might say, an outstanding court case, as the member will know, that will have to be resolved.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** The minister can't continue to hide behind the restructuring commission, because at the end of the day he, and he alone, is responsible for funding the health care system. He knows the mandate of the restructuring commission is to close hospitals on behalf of this government, but this minister



has the final responsibility to make decisions about the amount of reinvestment of savings in each of our communities, the funding for a labour adjustment strategy, the community-based services which will be put in place when the hospitals are shut down and the capital cost which the province is going to provide for hospital reconstruction.

Minister, you're responsible for all those decisions. People in our community are very concerned about those issues. That's why we, on their behalf, asked for a meeting, so we could express to you directly our concerns about what's going to happen in Sudbury. When will you meet with my colleague the member for Nickel Belt and me and representatives from our community to discuss these very important health care issues which will directly affect our community?

**Hon David Johnson:** I find this whole topic interesting from the point of view that it was the government represented by the members opposite that started this very process. Back several years ago the NDP government spent \$26 million on the district health councils to get the restructuring process started.

The role of the restructuring commission, through the experts led by Mr Sinclair, is to improve the quality of health care in our communities, and this government will be reinvesting. This government, as the member knows, has agreed to pay 70% of the capital cost of restructuring, which is more than the NDP government ever invested, more than the Liberal government ever invested, an unprecedented 70% in the restructuring capital process, and through long-term care, \$170 million, many other reinvestments, this government is living up to its promises to improve the health care system in Ontario.

#### FARM LAND TAXATION

**Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk):** My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. I have been reading press reports recently on the proposed changes to the taxation of farm lands, and the reports vary quite a bit. Some media reports suggest that farmers and food producers are quite pleased with this move and a number of farmers I've talked to are very pleased with this initiative, yet other media reports say that rural municipal politicians and leaders are concerned. Can the minister explain what the proposed changes will mean to farming communities in Ontario?

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** I thank the honourable member for Norfolk for his question. Yes, the member is quite correct that the farming community is very pleased with the restructuring and the shifting of their tax burden, which they have asked us to do for the last 25 years. Previous governments did not want to do it. Rural municipal politicians have asked us to remove the education tax from the tax bill. That has been removed.

For 26 years the farm tax rebate was in place as a temporary measure. It has now been removed. Farmers will be charged 25% of the assessment on their farm land and buildings. They will not have to make an interest-free

loan to the government of Ontario for six months. I'm very pleased with what we've done.

**Mr Barrett:** I've also seen conflicting media reports that suggest rural municipalities will have an increased burden on their finances if this proposed tax system for farm land and outbuildings is introduced. Some rural municipal leaders have expressed great concern that their tax base will not allow the flexibility they need to cope with the government's proposal. In my riding, for example, this could apply to the townships of Delhi, Norfolk and the city of Nanticoke. Can the minister explain the effect the proposed changes to farm taxation will have on rural municipalities?

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** As I said in the previous answer, rural politicians asked us to remove the education tax; \$5.4 billion has been removed.

*Interjections.*

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** Whiners? I don't think so.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Oriole, my day is now complete. Come to order.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** This leaves a great deal of room to manoeuvre. In many areas of Ontario two thirds of the tax bill was education. For those municipalities that have cut down their expenses and are still in a negative financial position, there is a \$1-billion fund which will be assisting them through this transition. That is what rural Ontario wanted and we have delivered.

1450

#### PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. My question relates to the challenges and continuous attacks the small business community faces from your government. The small business community, both in Metro and throughout the province, has had to bear the brunt of recent tough economic conditions. Bankruptcy or merely surviving on a monthly basis has been the norm for small business in Ontario and it is simply inconceivable that your government would choose to add to the burden. Your recent tax reform announcement will indeed create additional difficulty for the small business community in our province which is still in a very fragile situation.

My question to you is very simple: Will you agree to listen to the concerns being expressed by the small business community and rethink your government's ill-conceived and misguided position?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** We've already listened to the small business community. We've had many discussions with them on the property tax reforms we're planning to introduce. The property tax reforms that are coming in on the commercial-industrial side of the equation are going to give special consideration to small businesses. There will be proposals brought in that will have tax differentials based on value that will be of major benefit to small businesses.

**Mr Sergio:** Once again he's toeing the party line and refuses to see past the blind ideology which is creating so much pain and difficulty for the existing small businesses in our community.



Is the United Way wrong? Is the board of trade wrong? Is the Canadian Federation of Independent Business wrong? Are all those organizations that are appealing to the government to listen wrong?

The small business community simply cannot bear a \$7,900-a-year increase in municipal taxes. For many it will mean shutting the doors; for many it will mean closing down; for many it will mean losing jobs; for many it will mean moving south. It is wrong to burden our fragile business community.

Minister, if you are very serious, as is your Premier, about maintaining a growing, vibrant and healthy community within Metro, will you reconsider, will you rethink your position with respect to —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Minister.

**Hon Mr Leach:** Let's readdress what the board of trade is saying about our proposal. The board of trade is strongly in favour of amalgamation. The board of trade is strongly in favour of our property tax reform. The board of trade is strongly in favour of the position we're taking with small business. All the actions we're taking with respect to property tax reform in Ontario are going to benefit not only residential taxpayers but business taxpayers as well, and particularly it's going to benefit the small business in Ontario.

We know that the market value proposals that were brought forward by the NDP were going to decimate small businesses in Ontario; we know that. As a result, we've worked with small business right across the province and in particular in the city of Toronto, and we will ensure that there are tax policies in place that will be beneficial to small businesses right across Ontario, but particularly in the city of Toronto.

#### CHILD CARE

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. In the last three weeks we have seen example after example of the Harris government making decisions without understanding what the consequences would be. Today I want to raise another one and that's the downloading of child care.

Your announcement to download child care funding to municipalities is going to create huge new costs for municipalities. You've also said you're going to make child care mandatory, but you haven't said how you're going to do this. We need you to be crystal clear with us today about the mechanisms you're going to put in place to ensure quality and regulated child care is mandatory. Municipalities have been asking and they've been getting different answers. Some have been told that the total dollar amount will be mandatory as of January 1, 1998, some have been told that the total number of spaces will be mandatory as of January 1, 1998, but that they won't necessarily have to be regulated spaces.

Minister, will you please set out for us today clearly what mechanisms you have put in place to ensure the current level of service is maintained and there's no reduction in regulated child care.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** As the honourable member knows, one of the strengths of the child care system has been the par-

ticipation by the municipalities. Many of them had said to me in the consultations I've had over the past year that they were prepared to play a greater and more of a role in the child care system, and based on their track record, we felt that was an appropriate role for them to play.

We are working out many of the details with the municipalities, which I think is appropriate. We've certainly communicated to them how to maintain the existing system there now until we can make a very orderly and easy transition into the mandatory world we think is an appropriate way to do this. I've certainly heard the message from one of the organizations that has lobbied very hard on child care, which felt very strongly in the past that one of the protections for the system was to make it a mandatory service by municipalities. We have done that. If they wish to question that, I would be surprised, but perhaps they don't think that's the way to go now.

**Ms Lankin:** The problem is, Minister, we don't know yet what "mandatory" means. It's obvious that "mandatory" to your government is about as clear as mud. It's another example of how ill-thought-through these decisions of downloading social services are. You don't understand the consequences.

Okay, so you've told us you don't know yet about 1998. Let me ask you about 1997 because you just said we've communicated how to maintain the service levels. You haven't said how. Let me tell you that right now Grey county, while reviewing its 1997 budget, is considering cutting child care spaces, and it is not the only one. You've threatened municipalities with huge new costs that are going to come to them as of January 1, 1998, and you've put nothing in place to absolutely guarantee the service levels that are in place now.

It is not good enough. It is an open invitation for municipalities to drop regulated child care spaces and to put kids into informal, unregulated care. You've got to stop this. Tell us today how you will ensure that not one regulated child care space will be dumped in 1997 as a result of your downloading.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The honourable member can't have it both ways. The municipalities certainly have the ability to make decisions in this area. I would like to remind the honourable member that the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, an association she is very familiar with, has lobbied very long and hard — I have heard their cries for some months now — that the way to protect child care in this province is to make it a mandatory service for municipalities.

We have indeed done that and we look forward to working with the municipalities to ensure those services are put in place in a way that can protect quality and protect the safety of children, because it's a very important support in this province. We recognize that and that's why we are building on the strengths in the system to make it even better.

1500

#### VITAL STATISTICS REGISTRATION

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** My question today is for the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. In December 1996, you



announced an extension of the office of the registrar general counter services to additional locations in Ottawa, London, Windsor, North Bay and Sudbury. They are in addition to the counter services available in Hamilton, Thunder Bay and Toronto. Have you had an opportunity to assess public reaction to this customer service initiative?

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** The member is well aware that in the past, birth certificates and death certificates and marriage certificates had been available only if you actually travelled to Thunder Bay or Toronto to get them, or have them sent by mail. By mail, of course, it takes almost two months to get.

We had extended the pilot project to Hamilton very recently. I must thank the member for Wentworth East, Mr Doyle, and the member for Hamilton West, Mrs Ross, for attending. We saw at first hand what the reaction of the public was. Over 40 applications per day have been giving the convenience to people in Hamilton not to have to travel to Toronto or wait for two months to get these certificates.

I think this is going to be very good news for people in Ottawa, London, Windsor, Sudbury and certainly North Bay. They can now go to their own local registry offices and access these simple vital statistics.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** You need a baby doctor to have the baby.

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** Mr Speaker, I'd like to point out the member for Windsor-Sandwich is again railing at me. I should think it's good news that the people in her own community can access this in about 10 minutes as opposed to travelling to Toronto or waiting for two months. I hope you change your mind.

## PETITIONS

### COURT RULING

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** The repeal of the guilty verdict against Guelph resident Gwen Jacob has resulted in 4,095 signatures from people in my area on this petition.

"Whereas Justice Osborne stated that she, Jacob, did not commit an indecent act under the Criminal Code because her actions did not exceed the community standard of tolerance, however the community does not tolerate this judgement; and

"Whereas raising children to be good and decent in today's society is difficult enough. We monitor and rate television, movies and magazines for content, but what will be the point if they see half-naked women at school or on the way to the park; and

"Whereas we believe allowing women to expose themselves may create a rise in sexual crimes; and

"Whereas this does not attain women any respect or equality; and

"Whereas Justice Osborne also wrote no one who was offended was forced to continue looking, however, once having been seen, the offence has already taken place; continued onlooking is not the issue,

"Therefore, we call on Attorney General Charles Harnick to launch an appeal to reinstate the original verdict and agree with the community that exposure of the sexual anatomy is in fact an indecent act."

## ONTARIO CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTE

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** This is a petition to the Ontario Legislature.

"We, the undersigned, believe that helping reduce crime and abuse in our communities is our responsibility as employees of the Ministry of Correctional Services, as professionals in related fields and as a concerned citizens;

"Closing institutions which provide specialized services to women and treatment to men does not achieve that goal;

"Physical, emotional and sexual abuse is often transmitted from one generation to the next, with tremendous cost to society;

"Treatment aimed at breaking the cycle must include the abuser so that another generation of children is not raised with the same destructive lessons;

"As Mr Ross Virgo stated, the Ontario Correctional Institute is 'a therapeutic community known around the world for their techniques';

"Research statistics support anecdotal evidence that we are effective in changing abusive behaviour;

"A therapeutic community cannot exist in a super-prison;

"Save victims and money by keeping what works open."

I've affixed my signature to this.

## VETERANS HIGHWAY

**Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** I have today the honour of filing approximately 124 petitions signed by 124 constituents from my riding. The petition relates to a request to have Highway 416 named the Canadian Veterans Memorial Parkway.

I'm sure, Mr Speaker, you'll forgive me for introducing today my wife, Vi, and my sons, Geoff and Cory, who are in the public gallery.

## CHILD CARE

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** This is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario Tory government has decided to replace our current child care system with one that lacks compassion and common sense and is fraught with many dangerous consequences; and

"Whereas the concept of affordable, accessible and quality child care is a basic important fundamental right for many members of our community, who are either unemployed and enrolled in a training program or are working single parents, or where both parents are working; and

"Whereas if our present provincial government is sincere in getting people back to work, they should recognize the value of the child care component of the



Jobs Ontario program, and acknowledge the validity of the wage subsidy to the child care workers,

"We, the undersigned residents, business owners and child care workers of our Parkdale and High Park communities, urge the Progressive Conservative government of Ontario to immediately suspend their plans to implement cuts to our present child care programs across our province, and restore funding to their previous levels."

I agree with this petition and I am signing my name to it.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition from CAW Local 1995 in Collingwood, forwarded to me by Geoffrey Dalziel, a WCB rep, committee person and health and safety inspector, and also Terry Noseworthy, the president, and Selina Lawcock, the financial secretary. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Harris government has begun a process to open the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario; and

"Whereas this act is the single most important piece of legislation for working people, since it is designed to protect our lives, safety and health while at work and allow us to return home to our families in the same condition in which we left; and

"Whereas the government has made it clear that they intend to water down the act and weaken the rights of workers under the law, including the right to know, the right to participate and especially the right to refuse unsafe work; and

"Whereas this government has already watered down proper training of certified committee members;

"Therefore, we the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario not to alter the Occupational Health and Safety Act or erode the rights of workers any further and ensure strict enforcement of the legislation."

On behalf of my colleagues, I add my name to theirs.

#### NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I have affixed my signature.

#### CLASS SIZE

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the private member's bill introduced by Rick Bartolucci, MPP for the riding of Sudbury, limits the number of pupils that may be enrolled in a class in a school in Ontario; and

"Whereas this limit depends on the grade level of the class; and

"Whereas studies have concluded that there are clear benefits for smaller class sizes; and

"Whereas there is greater student involvement and interaction; and

"Whereas there is improved student performance; and

"Whereas there is the opportunity for greater individualization; and

"Whereas smaller class sizes allow for a more varied and constructive education for students;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support this private member's bill, as it enhances classroom education."

Of course, I affix my name to it.

#### PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition from the Communication, Energy and Paperworkers Union, CEP, on behalf of their tens of thousands of members in this province and across Canada. The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas the Harris government will introduce legislation to amend the Workers' Compensation Act and distribute a discussion paper about changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act; and

"Whereas the expected changes include erosion of the right to refuse unsafe work, workers will be forced to apply to their employer for WCB benefits and employers will decide if the claim is valid; reduction in power of the joint health and safety committees; and eliminate compensation for certain injuries and diseases; and

"Whereas the Workers' Compensation Act is a vital protection for all workers in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Occupational Health and Safety Act has prevented untold numbers of accidents and saved thousands from illness and diseases;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, demand full public hearings throughout the province of Ontario on the Workers' Compensation Act proposed changes, and no changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, workers' right to refuse and joint health and safety committees."

I add my name to theirs in support.

1510

#### PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** Mr Speaker, I just wanted to inform you that I keep receiving petitions against the \$2 user fee for seniors. They read as follows:

"Whereas the Minister of Health has started to charge seniors and social assistance recipients a \$2 user fee for each prescription filled; and



"Whereas seniors on a fixed income do not significantly benefit from the income tax savings created by this user fee copayment or from other non-related health user fees; and

"Whereas the perceived savings to health care from the \$2 user fee will not compensate for the suffering and misery caused by this user fee or the painstaking task involved to fill out the application forms; and

"Whereas the current Minister of Health promised as an opposition MPP in a July 1993 letter to Ontario pharmacists that his party would not endorse legislation that will punish patients to the detriment of health care in Ontario;

"We, the undersigned Ontario residents, strongly urge the government to repeal this user fee plan because the tax-saving user fee concept is not fair, is not sensitive, nor is it accessible to low-income or fixed-income seniors, and lest we forget, our province's seniors have paid their dues by collectively contributing to the social, economic, moral and political fabric of Canada."

Since I agree with this petition, I'm affixing my signature to this document.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition from the Ontario Federation of Labour, OFL, on behalf of the over 600,000 workers it represents in the province of Ontario.

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of workers for many years; and

"Whereas the centre and clinics have made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health and safety and the reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers; and

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that the education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

I add my name to theirs in support.

#### MANDATORY INQUESTS

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This petition is to the Honourable Solicitor General and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Progressive Conservative government of Ontario has decided to scrap mandatory inquests as a result of fatalities in the mining and construction industry; and

"Whereas this unprecedented and callous decision sets workplace safety back 20 years;

"We, the undersigned, request that Solicitor General Bob Runciman, on behalf of all workers in the mining and construction industry, reverse his decision to remove mandatory inquests from the Coroners Act of Ontario."

I affix my signature to this United Steelworkers of America petition, as I agree with it.

#### WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have further petitions regarding this government's ongoing attack on the rights of workers' health and safety, this time from the United Food and Commercial Workers, UFCW.

"To Premier Harris and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, oppose your government's plan to dismantle the workers' compensation system including reducing benefits; excluding claims for repetitive strain injuries, muscle injuries, strains, sprains, stress, harassment and most occupational diseases; eliminating pension supplements; handing over control of our claims to our employers for the first four to six weeks after injury; privatizing WCB to large insurance companies; integrating sick benefits into WCB; eliminating or restricting the Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal, WCAT; including eliminating worker representation on the board and eliminating the bipartite WCB board of directors.

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, demand a safe workplace, compensation if we are injured, no reduction in benefits, improved re-employment and vocational rehabilitation, an independent appeals structure with worker representation, access to the office of the worker adviser, that the WCAT be left intact and that the WCB bipartite board of directors be reinstated."

I add my name in support with theirs.

#### NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I have another petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I've affixed my signature.



## WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have petitions from the unions representing public sector workers in this province, CUPE and OPSEU.

"To the Honourable Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the following undersigned citizens, beg leave to petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the government of Ontario has plans to make changes to the Workers' Compensation Act which will have a negative impact on workers; and

"Whereas the changes include reducing the payouts to 85% of earnings, eliminating various types of injuries and having employees apply to their employer for benefits; and

"Whereas the WCB had a surplus of \$510 million in 1995;

"Whereas in 1994 there was an uncollected employer debt of \$173 million; and

"Whereas the problems within the WCB are not the fault of injured workers; and

"Whereas the recommendation to privatize will result in an increase of 13% in administrative costs;

"Therefore be it resolved that the government of Ontario stop its plan to privatize WCB and that extensive, province-wide hearings be held before any changes are made to the Workers' Compensation Board."

I add my name to theirs in support.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Mr Laughren from the standing committee on government agencies presented the committee's 30th report.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Does the Chair wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** No, Mr Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to standing order 106(g)(11), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### LENNOX AND ADDINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION AND TEACHERS DISPUTE SETTLEMENT ACT, 1997

### LOI DE 1997 SUR LE RÈGLEMENT DU CONFLIT ENTRE LE CONSEIL DE L'ÉDUCATION APPELÉ THE LENNOX AND ADDINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION ET SES ENSEIGNANTS

Mr Snobelen moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill 113, An Act to settle The Lennox and Addington County Board of Education and Teachers Dispute / Projet de loi 113, Loi visant à régler le conflit entre le conseil de l'éducation appelé The Lennox and Addington Board of Education et ses enseignants.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

I declare the motion carried. The ayes have it.

Do you have a statement to make, Minister?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** No, Mr Speaker, I believe my statement was made earlier to the House.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### CITY OF TORONTO ACT, 1996

### LOI DE 1996 SUR LA CITÉ DE TORONTO

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 103, An Act to replace the seven existing municipal governments of Metropolitan Toronto by incorporating a new municipality to be known as the City of Toronto / Projet de loi 103, Loi visant à remplacer les sept administrations municipales existantes de la communauté urbaine de Toronto en constituant une nouvelle municipalité appelée la cité de Toronto.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated Wednesday, January 29, I am required now to put the question.

Mr Leach has moved second reading of Bill 103.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members; this will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1520 to 1525.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mr Leach has moved second reading of Bill 103.

All those in favour of the motion will rise one at a time until your name is called.

### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Harnick, Charles	Pettit, Trevor
Baird, John R.	Harris, Michael D.	Preston, Peter
Barrett, Toby	Hastings, John	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Bassett, Isabel	Hudak, Tim	Ross, Lillian
Carr, Gary	Johnson, Bert	Runciman, Robert W.
Chudleigh, Ted	Johnson, David	Sampson, Rob
Clement, Tony	Johnson, Ron	Shea, Derwyn
Cunningham, Dianne	Kells, Morley	Sheehan, Frank
DeFaria, Carl	Klees, Frank	Snobelen, John
Doyle, Ed	Leach, Al	Spina, Joseph
Ecker, Janet	Leadston, Gary L.	Sterling, Norman W.
Elliott, Brenda	Marland, Margaret	Tascona, Joseph N.
Ford, Douglas B.	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tsubouchi, David H.
Fox, Gary	Munro, Julia	Turnbull, David
Galt, Doug	Murdoch, Bill	Villeneuve, Noble
Gilchrist, Steve	Mushinski, Marilyn	Wood, Bob
Grimmett, Bill	Newman, Dan	Young, Terence H.
Guzzo, Garry J.	O'Toole, John	
Hardeman, Ernie	Parker, John L.	

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will rise one at a time until your name is called.



**Nays**

Agostino, Dominic	Crozier, Bruce	McLeod, Lyn
Bartolucci, Rick	Curling, Alvin	Miclash, Frank
Bisson, Gilles	Hampton, Howard	North, Peter
Boyd, Marion	Kennedy, Gerard	Phillips, Gerry
Bradley, James J.	Kormos, Peter	Ruprecht, Tony
Caplan, Elinor	Kwinter, Monte	Sergio, Mario
Castrilli, Annamaria	Lajonde, Jean-Marc	Silipo, Tony
Christopherson, David	Laughren, Floyd	Wildman, Bud
Churley, Marilyn	Marchese, Rosario	Wood, Len
Colle, Mike	Martel, Shelley	
Conway, Sean G.	McGuinty, Dalton	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 55; the nays are 31.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated January 29, the bill is accordingly ordered referred to the standing committee on general government.

**LENNOX AND ADDINGTON COUNTY  
BOARD OF EDUCATION AND TEACHERS  
DISPUTE SETTLEMENT ACT, 1997**

**LOI DE 1997 SUR LE RÈGLEMENT DU CONFLIT  
ENTRE LE CONSEIL DE L'ÉDUCATION APPELÉ  
THE LENNOX AND ADDINGTON COUNTY  
BOARD OF EDUCATION ET SES ENSEIGNANTS**

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to proceed with the second and third reading of the bill introduced by the Minister of Education, Bill 113.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Agreed? Agreed.

Mr Snobelen moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 113, An Act to settle the Lennox and Addington County Board of Education and Teachers' Dispute / Projet de loi 113, Loi visant à régler le conflit entre le conseil de l'éducation appelé The Lennox and Addington County Board of Education et ses enseignants.

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** In light of the fact that —

**The Deputy Speaker:** Just a moment; I want to make an announcement. I would like to inform the members of the assembly that we have in the Speaker's gallery today a delegation from Trinidad and Tobago headed by Dr Hamza Rafeeq.

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** In light of the fact that we have unanimous consent on this bill, my comments will be very brief. Like previous governments, we are forced to protect the interests of children and end the job action. In this instance, it's the interests of 2,509 students in Lennox and Addington who require this legislation.

Let me be very clear: A strike is the admission of failure in a bargaining process and the ending of a strike with legislation is an admission of failure in the process of reaching a dispute settlement. Sadly, once again, we arrive at this point having had the lives of 2,509 students

disrupted. At least with the passage of this legislation they'll be disrupted no more.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** It is unfortunate when we reach these circumstances where legislation of this kind is brought forward by various governments at various times, because there's always the hope that there's going to be a favourable resolution, that when the two parties get together they're able to hammer out a collection agreement. It should be noted that in the overwhelming majority of cases in Ontario that in fact happens. The two sides sit down, they discuss matters of mutual concern and interest and they come forward with an agreement which isn't always fully acceptable to one side or the other, but it's an agreement with which both sides can live.

Unfortunately, what has happened this year, and I think last year, is that we're seeing a lot more conflict taking place because of the significant reductions in funding being provided to boards of education to carry out their responsibilities. So the pressures arise, and unfortunately what we have now are sometimes people within the secondary panel in some disagreement with the people in the elementary panel, and we have those who are representing employees in conflict with the boards of education from time to time, when in reality, if you look at it, the problem lies in the fact that there is really not sufficient investment in education to carry out all the responsibilities that a board of education has.

Ultimately it is the students who lose, because when there are cuts in the number of teachers available in the classroom, when there are resources that are not available, the publicly funded system being the system that levels the playing field for many, when those funds aren't there we see conflicts of this kind. We only hope this can be resolved by further negotiation and that the arbitrator won't be necessary.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further questions or comments? The member for Oriole. The member for Algoma.

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oroile):** No? Yes? Did you recognize me?

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I think it's Elinor Caplan.

**Mrs Caplan:** Are you going to yield the floor, the member for Algoma?

**Mr Wildman:** I'll just speak for a couple of minutes. If the member for Oriole wants to wait for a couple of minutes, I'll speak.

I want to say to the minister that we understand he has made accommodation in the bill by withdrawing the two subsections of section 3. I want to recognize that. The fact is that this is an attempt to try and deal with a very difficult situation and it is not one that any of us welcome.

As the minister said, the introduction of this kind of legislation is an indication of the failure of the collective bargaining process in this particular instance. It should be recognized, though, by all of us that under Bill 100, as it's referred to, over the last 20 years most negotiations between teachers' collective bargaining units and boards have been successful. The vast majority of the negotiations result in mutually agreed collective agreements.



Unfortunately, in this particular case the Education Relations Commission has deemed that it is very unlikely that the two parties will be able to come to an agreement, has recognized this and has recommended legislation. I hope that in doing this the minister and the government recognize the role of the ERC in these kinds of very difficult situations and continues this kind of process, because in most cases, 97% of the cases since the bill was passed about 20 years ago, the collective bargaining process has worked.

**Mrs Caplan:** I would just like to add my concern whenever we see collective bargaining break down. In the history of this province, since teachers have had the right to strike, we know that collective bargaining has worked in some 97% of the situations.

I support collective bargaining, I support collective bargaining for teachers and I hope that the government will not move to eliminate the right to strike for teachers across this province, because the system has worked well, and within the system as it exists today the Education Relations Commission is there as a safeguard to protect student interests.

I have always, in all the time I have been here, respected recommendations from the Education Relations Commission. In this case they have recommended legislation. They feel that there is no hope that the two parties can reach a collective agreement. That is a failure. The failures have been few, but we have to acknowledge that in this case there has been a failure.

I hope the government will not use this as an example of the failure of collective bargaining in the teaching and school sector across this province, because the history has been one of success. I believe that this is one of those unfortunate rare examples — I underline the word “rare” — and so I put the government on notice: Do not try to use this as an example of the failure of collective bargaining in the education sector in this province. I believe that the teachers have acted responsibly. We have respected collective bargaining and we have seen primarily successes, and it is regretful that in this rare case we have not had success.

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** Later this evening, I will be driving home and thereby past the North Addington Education Centre in Cloyne, where the snow will be deep, the Mazinaw frozen. People in Cloyne and Northbrook and environs will be happy to know that this strike is at an end, hopefully, by the passage of this bill now before the assembly.

I don't want to engage in debate at great length this afternoon, but I have in front of me the report of the Education Relations Commission to the minister. One aspect of the report gives me pause and I'm sure gives pause to the constituents of the member opposite, the member from South Hastings, Lennox and Addington. I refer to page 4, under the title “Negotiating History,” and I quote, “The labour relations record of these parties” — the secondary school teachers and the Lennox and Addington board — “must give rise to serious concern,” and the report goes on to detail a sad and sorry relationship over the last decade. The young people of North Addington, and Lennox and Addington generally, have been seriously inconvenienced on three occasions in the

last decade, as the member from South Hastings pointed out in his question yesterday.

I support the legislation, and as someone who supports collective bargaining, I want to say seriously to both the teacher leadership and the trustee leadership in Lennox and Addington, I don't know what the problem is or has been, but surely it is in the interests of the students, and more importantly, the broader public interest in that part of eastern Ontario and the province as a whole, that this sad and sorry negotiating record of the past decade be dealt with and that the students particularly of Lennox and Addington not face this situation for some very considerable time into the future.

1540

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister, you have two minutes to reply.

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I appreciate the comments of other members. I will have to correct one thing, and that is that the member for St Catharines is both right and wrong, wrong in the sense of the bargaining climate over the last couple of years. There have been problems in the bargaining climate, but this is the first time this government has had to bring this sort of legislation forward. I believe, if you'll check back, that this is an unusually infrequent number of times. However, you are quite correct that students are hurt by this process and I take to heart your other comments.

I would also like to mention that the member for Algoma is correct: It is very difficult to bring this legislation forward in a way that fairly treats this situation; that is problematic. The comments from the member for Algoma and the member for Fort William were very useful in getting this legislation before the House. I appreciate their efforts in that regard.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** It's the intention of our caucus to support the legislation that the minister has just brought before the House. It has been, as I indicated earlier this afternoon, the practice and the principle of our caucus to support back-to-work legislation in situations of teacher-board collective bargaining where due process has been fully followed.

The fundamental principle of due process is set out by the Education Relations Commission, which is established as an arm's-length independent commission under the law to ensure the smooth workings of the collective bargaining process, to provide independent fact-finding, to provide mediation and, perhaps most importantly of all, to monitor the jeopardy of students who are affected by a strike or lockout situation.

We are going to support the legislation because our paramount concern, as I believe it is the paramount concern of the Education Relations Commission, is to ensure that students are not jeopardized by a collective bargaining dispute between employees and a school board. In this case, the Education Relations Commission has today sent a letter indicating that it believes the impasse cannot be resolved in time to prevent jeopardy for students being encountered. I think it's worth taking time to enter into the record of the debate the statements from the commission in finding jeopardy.



"The commission has also received numerous phone calls, facsimiles, and letters from parents, students and other members of the community expressing their concern for the welfare of the students of Lennox and Addington. All this has led us to the conclusion that the parties are now in a situation of impasse in their negotiations. They are unable or unwilling to undertake the movement necessary to overcome the impasse. Further, there is no prospect that the situation will change before it becomes too late for students to make up the lost instructional time in order to successfully complete their courses of study."

Because the commission has so found, we will be supporting this legislation, which would have the teachers back in the classroom and which would lead hopefully to continued negotiations, hopefully to a resolution between the parties and, failing that, to the appointment of an arbitrator to make a final resolution.

Having said that and having recognized that it is our hope always to be able to find with the students and with the protection of the students' interests, we were very close, just a matter of two hours ago, to not being able to support, for the first time in my memory, legislation that is based on a finding of jeopardy. The reason that we might not have been able to support the legislation this afternoon is because the legislation that was originally presented just a short time ago was not, in my view, following the due process that had been set out by the Education Relations Commission.

I recognize the fact that the Education Relations Commission, which again has been established as an independent, arm's-length body, is nevertheless just advisory to the minister. The ministry is not bound by the recommendations of the Education Relations Commission. So it was legally possible within Bill 100, the law that governs collective bargaining between teachers and school boards, for the minister to accept none of the recommendations of the Education Relations Commission and to bring in whatever legislation he saw fit as appropriate to deal with this situation. However, I believe the purpose of the Education Relations Commission, and therefore the due process that is established in Bill 100 for governing collective bargaining situations, was jeopardized by the legislation that was originally put forward by this government.

There is some history to the bargaining situation that is perhaps necessary in order to explain this. I think an explanation is important, because this was a situation, as the education critic for the third party has already indicated earlier this afternoon, in which the board, one of the parties to this dispute, had made a decision to unilaterally change the contract which was in place at the time at which the strike action was begun.

I won't go into the details of the changes in that particular contract. I have no desire this afternoon to enter into any of the specifics of the ongoing dispute between the teachers and the board. But I have in front of me the letter from the Education Relations Commission which, at the same time as it finds jeopardy and recommends back-to-work legislation, says equally clearly that the teachers should be back in the classroom on the basis of the collective agreement that was in place on August 31, when the strike action began.

The government saw fit to ignore that advice of the Education Relations Commission and to put in place in the original legislation a clause which would have put the teachers back in the classroom on the basis of the contract which had been unilaterally altered by the board.

Again, I don't want to enter into the pros and cons of the bargaining. That is not appropriate, nor am I informed as to what has gone on at the bargaining table in any detail, nor should I be. But I find it difficult to accept the minister's statement this afternoon when he says it is difficult to bring forward legislation which adequately deals with this kind of situation, because there are many precedents for this minister and this government in bringing forth back-to-work legislation on the recommendations of the Education Relations Commission. There is no precedent, in all of the years that Bill 100 has governed collective bargaining with teachers in this province, for putting into legislation a clause which would amend the collective agreement that was in place at the time the strike action took place.

The government saw fit to do this, to take unprecedented action, to do that despite the fact that there has already been an arbitration award which found for the teachers and not for the board, but even more importantly, in my mind, to do it despite the fact that the same Education Relations Commission recommendation that said, "Bring in the back-to-work legislation," told them to bring that legislation in on the basis of the original collective agreement.

I found that a very serious violation of the process that's been put in place, and had that amendment not been made by the government to remove that clause — in fact, the two clauses that were in violation of the Education Relations Commission recommendations — I don't think we could have found it possible to support the legislation, in spite of our absolute commitment to the principle of being concerned most with students and their jeopardy. I guess the reason I feel so strongly about this is because I really believe in the process of an independent, arm's-length body that does everything possible to avoid the politicization of what are often difficult collective bargaining situations.

The whole idea, the whole purpose, of Bill 100, which was put in place by a Conservative government but which has been upheld and implemented by successive governments, both Liberal and New Democratic Party governments, was to make sure there was a process that did not come back for political debate in the Legislature, that did not allow for a political agenda of the governing party to be seen to be imposed on one or the other of the parties, and which did not hold students hostage to political agendas.

When you see any kind of politicization of that process, which was put in place in order to ensure that there would not be the imposition of political agendas on collective bargaining and therefore on the wellbeing of students in that process, I think we have to be concerned about the fact that it's there, the fact that it was proposed, and about why it was there in the first place, why the government, in acting on those recommendations today, saw fit essentially to inject itself into the dispute itself and to take sides in the dispute.



1550

There is another aspect of the legislation that was put in front of us a mere few hours ago that I find difficult. It is not going to prevent my recommendation to my colleagues in caucus that we support the legislation, because for us the finding of jeopardy of students has to be paramount, but I do want to express my concerns about it. It's the fact that there is something else which is almost unprecedented. There are very few situations in which the Education Relations Commission has not been the body that would appoint an arbitrator in the event that the parties cannot either resolve this dispute at the bargaining table or agree between the two sides on an arbitrator.

There is in this legislation the provision that the two parties can agree to appoint an arbitrator, but should that not be the case, should collective bargaining that is to take place in the next two weeks not lead to resolution, should the parties not be able to agree on an arbitrator, then the Lieutenant Governor in Council, which of course is our way of referring to the cabinet and therefore to the government, will have the power to appoint the arbitrator.

This is not consistent with the recommendations of the Education Relations Commission, which set out that the parties should try to resolve the dispute, that they should have the ability to agree on an arbitrator, but which also said if that's not possible then the Education Relations Commission, which is much more traditional, should appoint the arbitrator in this situation.

I am concerned that the government would feel it necessary to take that power from the Education Relations Commission and I have raised the issue with ministry and minister representatives. The defence of having placed this particular clause in the legislation, of having not acted on the recommendations of the Education Relations Commission in this case, is that it may be that as of tomorrow the Education Relations Commission cannot function because it does not have a quorum. I find that an incredible defence, because quite clearly the responsibility for maintaining a quorum in the Education Relations Commission, which is basically just making sure there are enough people appointed to the commission that they can do the work of the commission, rests solely with the government.

I have to ask myself why a government would allow an Education Relations Commission that is charged with the very important, critical task of monitoring collective bargaining processes, and particularly monitoring to ensure that disputes do not lead to jeopardy for students, to reach a point where it cannot function, and that as of tomorrow that body that does fact-finding, that does monitoring and mediation and recommends that students are in jeopardy, will no longer be able to function because it does not have a quorum because this government has not appointed people to the commission.

The minister assures me they intend to make the appointments to the commission. There is a provision in this legislation. It is section 13. It is also unprecedented. There has never been the need for such a provision in legislation of this nature before. That provision says that if the Education Relations Commission — I'm reading this into it. It allows for the minister to take the powers

that the legislation gives him and his cabinet and give those powers back to the Education Relations Commission. You might say, why would you have the power in your legislation to delegate back to the commission when the commission isn't getting the powers now because it doesn't have a quorum? The minister assures me that they do intend to appoint people to the Education Relations Commission and that if they get their people appointed, then they will give the powers back to the commission, presumably including the power to appoint an arbitrator.

But again I have to raise the question of how a government could allow this to happen. If you consider this to be an important body, if you consider this process to be important, if you consider the monitoring and the mediation and the finding of jeopardy in the interests of students to be important functions for the commission to carry out, how could you allow the commission to reach the point where it can no longer function?

I suppose one possible interpretation is that this is just sheer disorganization, sheer mismanagement, that nobody was paying attention, that you couldn't find people you were comfortable appointing to the commission, and that raises a whole other set of issues about what kind of criteria the government has in looking for people who will be on the commission. You might ask why they couldn't simply continue the term of appointment of the people who are currently on the commission until they can find people to relieve them. Why would the government allow this commission to reach a point where it can no longer carry out its important work?

You might, if you were a little bit cynical, see this as a rather thinly veiled way of getting control of collective bargaining, because of course what this legislation does is give the minister and cabinet powers which normally in legislation of this nature it has not held, including the power to appoint the arbitrator.

I guess that's one of the issues I want to talk about as we debate this legislation. I'm concerned about the agenda behind what we have just experienced in the last few hours. I'm concerned about an agenda that appears to provide a basis for government to introduce an unprecedented clause into back-to-work legislation, an unprecedented clause which would interject the government into taking sides in the dispute and which would allow unilateral changes in a contract that existed between the board and its teachers. I'm concerned about an agenda that would have the ministry not only let the Education Relations Commission go without appointees so that it cannot function, but bring in legislation which then gives it the power to appoint arbitrators.

We know — I have no question in my mind — that one of the agendas of this government is to take control of educational funding in order to take at least \$1 billion of educational costs out of the budget for education in this province. We have evidence of that in so many areas. One of the most recent pieces of evidence for the government's intention to control educational costs by taking control of educational financing is a report that was done by the Ernst and Young company for the minister in which the consultant, Ernst and Young, expresses its very real concern about the fact that the amalgamation of



boards, which the minister has presented as a way of saving dollars, could in fact lead to an increase in costs in education.

Experience of amalgamations has shown that this is invariably the case, that amalgamation does not lead to less costs, that it leads to more costs as you begin to try to consolidate the literally hundreds of contracts which will have to be consolidated in the amalgamation process, and as you begin to equalize services, presumably at a level that is above average and not below average. Inevitably then the costs of any amalgamation process become higher, not lower.

Ernst and Young expressed that very concern to the ministry and saw fit to put their concern into a preface to the study they gave to the minister. They also saw fit to put in their introduction to that study the ministry's answer, which was to say essentially, "Don't worry because we're not just going to amalgamate school boards, we're also going to take control of educational finance and then we will control the costs." I think that is clear evidence this government wants control of educational finance to be able to once more gut financial support for education.

It would seem that the Minister of Education wants to get the \$1 billion almost any way he can, but would perhaps prefer to get it by attacking teachers' salaries. I think the clauses that were originally in this legislation we're debating today provide some evidence of the direction and intent of this minister and this government.

I think as well that the kinds of comments which have been made by the Minister of Education this week, the comments that make it very clear he is reviewing the collective bargaining process with an intention to bring in legislation this spring, make it clear that it is the collective bargaining process and teachers' salaries that are the focus for his next effort to take money out of education.

I have some very real concerns, once again, not just about taking another \$1 billion out of education, but about the way in which this minister is reviewing what is a very sensitive, difficult area of public policy, and that is the collective bargaining process between school boards and teachers. I find myself wondering if the Minister of Education is once again doing what he preaches, and that is to create the kind of crisis which makes change inevitable.

If the Education Relations Commission is ineffective because there have been no appointments to the commission, if it can't do its job of mediating, of fact-finding, of monitoring whether students are in jeopardy, then clearly the legislation that established that commission, the legislation that governs collective bargaining between boards and teachers, is going to be seen to be ineffective.

1600

That's one of the reasons I think it is absolutely unconscionable for this government, whether it was through mismanagement or deliberate intent, to let the Education Relations Commission appointments go to the point where the commission could no longer function. But it certainly does create a crisis and a climate in which this minister may feel he can now step in and change the process.

I believe that it is time to review Bill 100, the legislation which governs collective bargaining between teachers and boards. I can't remember the exact year in which Bill 100 was brought in, although my colleague the member for Renfrew North may be able to give me a quick prompt on that.

**Mr Conway:** It was 1975.

**Mrs McLeod:** Thank you very much. Our memories both go back that far, but your memory for dates is more accurate than mine.

Nevertheless, that suggests that it is some 21 years that the legislation has been in place. It seems appropriate to review it; to look at how well that legislation has worked over the course of that 21 years; to look at whether there are parts of it that need to be changed; and again, because our paramount concern is the protection of students and their wellbeing, to ask ourselves as a Legislature the question of whether or not that legislation does enough to protect students against disruption in their education. All of those I believe are legitimate reasons to undertake a process of review of the collective bargaining legislation that we have in place.

But let there be no doubt in anybody's mind that we have to have a reasonable process for fair collective bargaining or we will indeed have the chaos that leads to crisis after crisis. I do go back long enough to remember what it was like to be bargaining for school boards with teachers in the days before Bill 100, when there were no legal strikes in the province of Ontario, where the only action that was open to teachers who were in a dispute with their board was to tender mass resignations.

I don't want to take time this afternoon to go back and tell you what that does to a community, but I've been there. I've experienced what it's like when the only way to deal with an impasse in negotiations is for the employees to have to tender mass resignations with absolutely no guarantee of re-employment. It escalates the level of emotion to a point that makes resolution in any sort of fair and reasonable way almost impossible. It brings the community of people who are concerned about education into the dispute in a way which is so highly charged that communities have difficulty recovering from that divisiveness for years and years.

I don't want to go back to the pre-Bill 100 situation, because whatever concerns we might have about the way collective bargaining has functioned in the last 21 years, it is infinitely preferable to what happened before Bill 100.

Bill 100 was brought in by a Conservative government to provide a reasonable basis for full and fair bargaining and to provide at the same time — and I'm going to stress it again — an independent process for fact-finding, for mediation and for monitoring the wellbeing of students.

There are many — and I suspect many who are watching the debate this afternoon — who would say that they think the process of collective bargaining under Bill 100 has worked relatively well. We need to hear the views of those who believe it has worked well. We need to have the review, we need to ask ourselves the questions, but I would like to think the review would be carried out with some openness to really look at whether



there needs to be change and whether the change will work for good collective bargaining and in the interests of students.

I do not believe this Minister of Education has gotten off to a good start for that kind of objective review with input from all of the stakeholders affected by having the report done by his good friend Mr Paroian, a report which, as we have seen, has been considered to be so biased and so filled with inaccurate information that his conclusions and recommendations have no credibility at all.

It is ironic that a government that has commissioned consultant report after consultant report has ignored virtually every piece of advice that has been given to it in those reports. Whether it was the Ernst and Young study presented to the Minister of Education that said, "Go back to the drawing board before you amalgamate boards. Find out why education costs are going up so high. Look at the needs of special education students to see what factors are out of control for boards and drive costs up," they ignored that; whether it was the Ernst and Young report that said amalgamation will lead to increased costs, potentially, not to decreased costs, they ignored that; or whether it was the David Crombie report that said, "Do not take education off the property tax because the price we pay for it, if you are determined to dump other social services on to the municipalities, is simply too great," they ignored that.

This government, which has ignored virtually every report and advice that has been given to it in the last months, may well find Mr Paroian's report to be the one which it is prepared to look at seriously, because it fits with the predetermined agenda of the minister. I hope that's not the case, because if we are going to have a fair review of collective bargaining legislation and if at the end of that review we are to have a good piece of legislation brought before this House, with any amendments that might be proposed, and if we are to have the kind of due process which will allow future governments to act in a way which is not injecting a political agenda into the dispute but which allows us to act in the interests of students and to have the support of opposition parties for any future legislation that might be required in terms of a back-to-work ruling, we are going to have to have a cleaner start than Mr Paroian's report.

I trust that this government is now going to facilitate the appointments to the Education Relations Commission — the minister assures me that will be the case — that it will follow due process, that it will avoid politicizing the collective bargaining process and that we will have a reasonably objective review of the collective bargaining process that has been in place for some 21 years.

Having said that, I have to say further that, even if Mr Paroian's report is set aside with all of its bias, I am not sure we can have a full, fair and objective review of collective bargaining in the climate that has already been created, in the climate in which the government and the Minister of Education are clearly looking for at least \$1 billion out of education in order to pay for the tax cut and where the minister clearly believes in getting control of educational funding and, indirectly at least, the collective bargaining process.

The minister may not have been deliberately trying to create a crisis by failing to make appointments to the Education Relations Commission, but he has certainly successfully created a sense of crisis in almost every other area of education. I would be happy to take time this afternoon to once again talk about the crisis that has been created by the cuts that were made to education a year ago, by the impact of those cuts on our classrooms; the crisis that was created for school boards, for example, that believed in the importance of junior kindergarten classes and were faced with having to cut other services, raise taxes or lose junior kindergarten; the anguish of special education parents who found that the needs of their students could not be met because of the financial constraints on school boards that were created because of the crisis that \$400-million cut, which was really more like a \$1 billion, had.

I'm not going to take a lot of time to get into my own frustration that we have a Minister of Education who will not in any way acknowledge the impact of the cuts and continuously misuses information, misrepresents factual information, in order to create the sense that there is more money that can be cut from education.

We have so many examples. There is the \$6 billion that the minister says is spent outside the classroom, as if that were somehow wasteful and can be dispensed with, when we know in fact that \$6 billion, in large measure, goes to support student busing to get them to school and janitorial and custodial maintenance of our schools so that our kids can go to school in clean buildings. There isn't \$6 billion of wasted money spent outside the classroom; that is critical classroom support.

I heard last night one of the ministers of the cabinet suggest that spending on Ontario students was the highest of any jurisdiction in Canada. That's simply factually wrong. The spending in Ontario per student is 46th out of 62 in the United States and Canada, very close to the bottom, and another \$1 billion in cuts will put our per student spending right at the bottom. If you want to look just at Canada, there are five jurisdictions in Canada that spend more per student than Ontario does. But the attempt to create the impression that we are wasting money because we are spending so much and it's not going to students is something which this minister has felt compelled to do repeatedly, no matter how much evidence is given that this is not the case.

1610

The minister has also made it very clear that it's his intention to take more money out of education by saying, in fact "bragging" I think is the more appropriate term, a year ago — and I think this is almost a direct quote — that if you think last year's cuts were tough, wait until you see next year's cuts. If that isn't an indication of where this government is going with education, I don't know what else it could be.

What happened of course was that the people said, "No, wait a minute." Parent groups, those parents of kids who wanted to be in junior kindergarten and have that opportunity, parents of special needs kids who saw the support for their children being eroded, started coming and saying, "We don't want more cuts to education; we value education." The government realized it was in



trouble, so it backed away. It didn't make the cuts in November that we all believed were coming.

Now the government has to look at new ways of getting at the education funding so it can find its billion dollars. The first thing they do then is essentially collapse school boards. That's what Bill 104, which brings big mega-boards into place, is all about. It's about the eventual dissolution of school boards. They're an irritant. They may disagree that the answer to spending cuts from the province is to cut JK and to cut special ed, and they might raise taxes locally in order to make sure you can keep those services for kids, so they're an irritant. Not only that, but he can't take another billion dollars away from them without having both the trustees and the parents express their concerns.

So we're going to have mega-boards that are well removed from the local situation, that are virtually unable to be accessible to the concerns of their local communities, but that are still somehow going to be what the minister calls the employer of record. That is the issue that is perhaps most relevant to today's debate, because I'm not sure how these mega-boards are going to be able to bargain.

Remember, we've got a situation where Bill 104 is in front of the House, amalgamating the school boards and making necessary the amalgamation of the hundreds of collective agreements which now exist. We also have a situation where those school boards are going to have no control over any of the dollars that are spent on education at all because they will all be controlled by the Minister of Education and the government. I don't know how those boards, even though they may be the employer of record, can possibly carry out collective bargaining with their employees when they have no control over the dollars they have to spend to support the agreements that are reached at the bargaining table. I think already we have precluded, through the amalgamation of school boards legislation, a fair and objective review of the collective bargaining process, because I don't think those mega-boards are going to be able to successfully bargain.

I don't believe the situation in the course of the next months is going to be manageable, so we have a situation in which there will be chaos and confusion and in which the Minister of Education will once again have successfully created the crisis that he believes is necessary for change. Over the course of the next few months, according to the terms of Bill 104, we will have appointed an Education Improvement Commission. I want to be very clear: This is not the Education Relations Commission, it's an Education Improvement Commission, a new body of people yet to be appointed by the government because the legislation's not in place, although that hasn't stopped them from appointing the co-chairs of this education commission. But the education commission is going to be given powers, once it's officially in place in law, that are retroactive to the middle of last month — well, of January, this month past. The powers that the commission will be given take the place of any powers which the elected boards now have.

I've expressed my concern about the fact that I don't know how these new amalgamated boards, without any control of dollars, are going to be able to be the employer

of record or to carry out collective bargaining, but I certainly don't know how this Education Improvement Commission is going to create the kinds of conditions in which there can be any collective bargaining carried out in the course of the next year.

The Education Improvement Commission is going to be given powers under Bill 104 to control all the hiring and firing that is done by school boards. As of January 14, in fact, even though the law is not in place, no school board can enter into contracts that don't meet with the approval of this commission that has yet to be appointed because at this point it's not law to appoint it. School boards as of this moment in time essentially have no power to hire or fire, except under guidelines that have been approved by a yet to be appointed commission. How do they enter into collective bargaining agreements that affect the hiring or potentially the firing of employees?

There is a clause in Bill 104 that says the exception to this is anything that falls under the collective bargaining agreement, but it's hard for me to reconcile that with the fact that the Education Improvement Commission will have the power to approve or amend any board budget. I find that an incredible power to be given to an appointed commission, because we still have local boards that were duly elected, that raise taxes because they are an elected body with the power to tax. And yet those powers have been suspended and they cannot bring in a budget this year that does not have the approval of the Education Improvement Commission, and that same commission can amend the local board's budget. Even though anything which is part of the collective agreement process is somehow exempt from the powers that have been taken away from school boards, since the boards don't have the power to put a budget in place, I don't know how they can carry out collective bargaining.

There's even a clause in Bill 104 that says that no board, as of the middle of this past month, can enter into a contract that extends beyond the end of December 1997, so I find it puzzling that in the legislation that's before us today, the legislation establishes a contract period which does not expire until August 1998. I don't know whether this legislation is therefore in conflict with the government's legislation, Bill 104, or whether the whole thing is just sheer, massive confusion.

I don't know what kinds of guidelines can possibly be put in place by the Education Improvement Commission or by the ministry or by anybody else that is going to make for an easy transition for the amalgamated boards when they are faced with harmonizing all of the existing collective agreements. I think we are guaranteed to have the crisis the Minister of Education so likes to create from the moment the amalgamated boards are formed and are given the task of harmonizing collective agreements, given no dollars with which to do that, and yet are still considered to be the employer of record. In the meantime, before the amalgamated boards are in place, we are going to have the sheer chaos of boards that have had their powers stripped away from them, and in particular their ability to approve the budgets to support any collective agreement.

So we need an Education Relations Commission, as impossible as the job of that commission may be. We



need the commission because we are going to have a period in collective bargaining in this province such as we have never seen before.

I trust that we will never come into this Legislature again in the course of the chaos of the next months facing a piece of legislation in which the recommendations of the commission are reversed and in which the government appears to be putting its own political agenda in place. I trust that we are going to have some kind of reasonable review of the collective bargaining process, even though I'm sceptical that's going to be possible, since I really believe there are different agendas driving the process from the ministry's perspective than the agenda of trying to get a process that works effectively both for collective bargaining and most particularly for students.

Nevertheless, I believe we have to support the legislation that's before us today because we have a finding of students being in jeopardy. That has become paramount. I am relieved in no small measure that the government has agreed to the withdrawal of the clauses which would have so clearly injected the government into the process of the bargaining itself and in my view imposed a government agenda on that process. Because they have withdrawn those most offensive and challenging clauses, I trust that my caucus colleagues will join with me in supporting this legislation so that students can be back in the classroom. With that, I will look forward to the further debate.

1620

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** I just want to congratulate the member on the speech she's given in the debate on the legislation that's before us, which is dealing with the strike situation that exists within the particular district.

She pointed out the fact that the government, through negotiations back and forth with the Liberals and the NDP, talking with the minister and the House leader, has agreed to make two changes that will go a long way towards making sure that this legislation will probably pass. Other than that, it would not have been possible to pass this legislation today. Now I understand we're going to be able to have some kind of an understanding that the school board and the teachers are going to get back to the bargaining table and will know that the situation can be resolved.

I know the member for Algoma wants to get into the debate on this piece of legislation and he's more knowledgeable, as the critic for our New Democratic Party, in dealing with this situation. I'm looking forward to the comments he's going to have concerning the discussions he had as House leader in reminding the Minister of Education and the government House leader that changes had to be made to the draft legislation we had seen earlier this morning. The Liberal member has just mentioned that, that there were changes made to it that are more receptive than the original legislation they were going to table in the House today, so I'd like to congratulate her for the debate she had.

**Mr Conway:** I want to commend my colleague from Fort William for her remarks. She said many things. I

want to highlight a couple of points that were made by the member for Fort William, the former chair of the Lakehead Board of Education, and that is that there are many who share — I think we all have frustration with these processes that don't always settle arguments as quickly as we might like, and in some cases lead to lock-outs or strikes. There are many today, as there were 10 and 15 years ago, who would argue, "Just get rid of the right to strike and there will be greater happiness in teacher-school board relations."

It is important for those of us who have been around here for some time to recall as Mrs McLeod, the previous speaker, did, that in Ontario before there was Bill 100 we had quite a spectacle. We had the mass resignations, we had all kinds of work-to-rule and other such disturbances. So there is ample precedent in modern Ontario for disruptions and dislocations without there being Bill 100. Bill 100 should be reviewed and amended and there is I think general agreement. But as the Education Relations Commission has observed in its report today about Lennox and Addington, the best kind of solution is one where both local parties agree on terms and conditions and negotiate that amicably at the table.

But let there be no confusion. If people think that we should just eliminate the right to strike and we're going to have some kind of unalloyed happiness in teacher-school board relations, Mrs McLeod is quite right in recalling the pre-1975 situation in Ontario, which was far from that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further questions or comments? If not, the member for Fort William, you have two minutes.

**Mrs McLeod:** Just in summary, in supporting the legislation in the interests of students and in support of the finding of the Education Relations Commission, the finding of jeopardy, I want to express my dismay that there should have been any necessity for debate around this piece of legislation at all.

There would not have been a real necessity for debate if it hadn't been for the apparent politicization of the agenda in the original legislation that was presented, and if it hadn't been for the fact that there are some further issues of concern that are in the legislation in rather unprecedented situations, such as the cabinet having more power to appoint arbitrators and that, according to the minister, the only reason those are there is because the government failed to appoint people to the Education Relations Commission.

I just find it so difficult to accept what the minister tells me at face value when our alternative is to believe that the government has simply mismanaged the entire responsibility of ensuring that the Education Relations Commission can continue to function and that it was somehow difficult for them to draft legislation which would not have injected the government's agenda in support of, in this case, the board, but one of the parties, when in fact all precedents they had before them would have taken them in a very different route.

The easiest route for the government today, the clearest route for the government, because perhaps these things are never easy, was to act on the recommendations of the Education Relations Commission, as it was set out, to



bring in a straightforward piece of legislation which would indeed have had the support of parties in the House, as it has traditionally had, because we respect that process, and in the future to make sure the Education Relations Commission is fully staffed and functional so that we may never encounter this kind of situation or this kind of legislation in the Legislature again.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Wildman:** I rise on behalf of my caucus to participate in this debate on this bill, and I must say that like other members, I regret very much that we have to enter into this debate.

Those of you who have known me for a while will know that I have certain biases that I guess I should lay out right at the outset, and they are that I personally used to be a member of the teaching profession, that I was a member of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation and that I participated for three years as a salary negotiator for that organization many years ago.

I recall, as does the member for Fort William, the situation, although I was on the other side of the fence from what she was at the time, as it was prior to the passage of Bill 100. It was a very sorry situation in many cases across Ontario, because neither boards nor school teacher federations really had any kind of framework within which to resolve difficult disputes, and there were many situations where work to rule had been instituted or where there had been withdrawal of certain services, where the boards had tried to take sanctions against teachers on some occasions, and there were no real guidelines.

As a result of that difficult experience, the teachers' federations and the provincial government of the time, the government of William Davis, a Conservative government, looked at the whole situation and passed a piece of legislation that has been called, ever since, Bill 100. That piece of legislation has governed teacher-board collective bargaining ever since, for over 20 years, in Ontario. In some areas there have been continuous problems, but they have been very much the minority of areas, because in most situations since the passage of Bill 100 teacher-board agreements have been arrived at mutually without the resort to either lockout or strike. As a matter of fact, over 97% of the negotiations over the last 20 years have not resulted in any loss of class time for students. I think that's what's important for us to recognize.

Prior to the passage of Bill 100, there were more disruptions than there were subsequent to the passage of Bill 100. Prior to the teachers having been given the right to withdraw their services in a dispute, there were many more disruptions than happened in many areas subsequent to the passage of Bill 100 and the provision of the right to strike to the teaching profession. So I think we should look at this legislation that we are discussing here today for Lennox and Addington in the context of what is being discussed in the education agenda in Ontario today.

1630

We've had a number of reports prepared by consultants for this government that have made a number of recommendations. We've also had the minister, on behalf of the government, make it very clear that his top priority is to take as much money as possible out of the education

system. He says he only wants to take that money out of administration and cut administrative fat, that he doesn't want to take it out of the classroom. As a matter of fact, his party guaranteed in the election campaign that while there would be cuts in education, educational classroom funding would be guaranteed and there would not be any cuts in that regard.

So we saw in 1996 the government remove \$400 million from elementary and secondary education in Ontario over a very short period of time in the school year. On an annualized basis, that worked out to somewhere around \$800 million to \$1 billion in cuts. When it was pointed out to the minister that it wasn't really \$400 million, it was upwards of \$800 million to \$1 billion, the minister said: "Fine. If we can get that much out, all the better."

He insists that classroom education has not been affected. He also insists that the cuts were only 1.8% of expenditures, that this is less than 2%, so it should not be very much for boards to be able to find and should not affect classroom education: \$800 million.

One of the ways the minister has been able to deal with this is by redefining what "classroom education" is. He excludes a number of things that most people involved in education understand to be part of classroom education for students. Let's keep in mind, all of us in this debate, that the student is the most important person in the education system. That's what education is about.

The minister says that a number of things are not part of classroom education. Somehow he says that junior kindergarten at the elementary level and adult education day programs at the secondary level are not part of classroom education. As I've said before, the last time I checked, those kinds of programs were carried on within the four walls of classrooms. But somehow for this government they are not classroom education.

We've seen larger class sizes as a result of the cuts, meaning less individual time for the student with the teacher, less remedial work, less contact between the teacher and the student on an individual basis. We've seen cuts to special education programs which affect all students. They certainly affect the special needs students, because if you have teacher aide cuts or if you have specialized services for students with special needs that are cut, those students then don't get their needs met, and in many cases, because they're integrated into the normal classroom, the lack of response to their needs adversely affects all of the other students in the class. The teacher has to spend more time with the special needs students, or if the teacher is unable to do that, in some cases the special needs kids may act out and may then affect the atmosphere in the classroom and affect the learning experience of all the other students in the class.

We've seen in Metropolitan Toronto and urban centres cuts in English-as-a-second-language programs. We've seen support services cut. I've had anecdotal evidence given to me of situations where classroom supplies are short; where students don't have enough textbooks, two and three kids having to share textbooks, not being able to take their textbooks home at night to do their homework because they don't have individual texts; where



they run out of paper halfway through the year; where art classes run out of paint. Music programs are being cut.

In some cases user fees are being imposed on students so that they have to pay for their art supplies or for their musical instruments. In some cases, in extracurricular programs where there have been user fees to help pay for busing, for instance, those user fees are going up substantially, so you find that students who come from families that are of meagre means cannot participate in those programs any more.

I think we really have to look at what's happening in education in this province. The most insidious approach of this government has been to say that teacher preparation time is not related to the classroom, is not included in classroom education, as if teachers are somehow taking a period off during the day, or, if they are doing some kind of work, it's not in preparation for the classroom. Frankly, that's an insult to the teaching profession. I believe it's an insult to the intelligence of the public of Ontario. What on earth are teachers preparing for if they're not preparing for the classroom, if they're not preparing lessons? In some cases they use that preparation time to contact parents to talk about students, to give remedial help to students. But the minister does not classify that as classroom education and therefore has said that preparation time for teachers can be cut.

The fact is that even though the minister, before Christmas, announced there would not be further cuts to the operating funds of school boards in 1997, he still intends to get another \$1 billion out of the education system to help finance the tax cut that has been promised by the government. To be fair to Mr Snobelen, the Minister of Education and Training, when he made his announcement before Christmas, he did say that boards would have to be prepared for further cuts in 1998.

Some might ask, what does this have to do directly with the Lennox and Addington County Board of Education situation? As I understand it, in this negotiation the board has said to the teachers that it needs to find \$875,000, and the only place that it can get \$875,000 is out of the collective agreement. What the board has said to the teachers is: "We have to cut back on teachers. We have to cut back on the number of teachers, therefore increasing class size; we have to cut back on the number of positions of responsibility, department heads, to save money; we have to increase pupil-teacher ratio, again affecting students because it means bigger classes, less individual contact between student and teacher; and we have to cut teachers' wages."

If the board believes that it must find almost \$1 million, that it has to take it out of the collective agreement, obviously that was going to make for very difficult negotiations, because even in a time of low inflation, very few people are prepared to take cuts in pay or to have members of the collective bargaining unit laid off. But more than that, as professionals, I believe the teachers were very concerned in this particular situation about the effects on their classes, on their students; that if we saw in Lennox and Addington increased class size, that would adversely affect the student. It's not surprising that the members of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation in Lennox and Addington were not prepared

to simply say yes to the board when the board said: "We've got to cut you. We've got to cut the collective agreement. There have to be takeaways."

1640

What did this mean for the situation there? As I understand it, the board eliminated department heads. That affected 44 people in the collective bargaining unit. There is a 60-day clause in Bill 100 which allows boards to change the terms and conditions of employment after 60 days, but in this particular case the board did not wait the proper length of time.

The federation went to arbitration and won the arbitration; the arbitrator agreed with the members of the federation and ruled against the board. But as I understand it, the board then refused to reinstate the people who had been cut as department heads. The board finally agreed to pay the back pay that had been deducted from them because they had lost their position of responsibility, but they still were not reinstated. So the board got a ruling against it and still didn't comply with the arbitrator's ruling. That led the teachers, as I understand it, to file a complaint of unfair bargaining, bargaining in bad faith, and that's not surprising.

I understand the teachers were also asked by the board to take cuts, but the board didn't just ask for that; the board arbitrarily, unilaterally, decided to do it. The board cut salaries by 2.87% and forced the teachers to pay 20% of the benefits that had been paid 100% before by the board.

But this is what really concerns me, because we are here talking about students and what happens to students: The board changed the PTR and increased it to 16.7. That means they increased class sizes and they laid off three teachers as a result. This move also affected 21 other teachers who were not laid off but had changes in their terms and conditions of work.

I want to emphasize that the terms and conditions of work for teachers are also the learning environment for students. Why do boards and teachers, most of them, in their collective agreements across Ontario have agreements around pupil-teacher ratio or class size? The reason is that, as professionals, teachers have felt they should negotiate optimum class sizes for the benefit of the students. I don't think you'll find very many students who disagree with that. Students and parents understand that if classes are too large, students don't get the kind of individual attention they should, and teachers, even if they attempt to, can't provide the kind of individual attention they would like to.

Obviously in this kind of situation, with the board taking these kinds of unilateral actions, the atmosphere at the bargaining table was not very good. I will refer you to the letter sent to the Honourable John Snobelen, Minister of Education and Training, dated January 29, 1997, yesterday, from Paula Knopf, the chair of the Education Relations Commission.

The Education Relations Commission, as we all know, was set up by the provincial government under Bill 100 to assist in collective bargaining, to assist boards and teachers to reach amicable agreements. They have an important role to play in determining when students' years, their progress, is jeopardized by a dispute between



a board and teachers. In doing this, the Education Relations Commission wrote to the Minister of Education yesterday and pointed out that, "The teachers have filed a complaint with the ERC alleging that the board has breached its statutory duty to bargain in good faith." In other words, they've charged bad-faith bargaining. That has not yet been ruled on by the commission.

The Education Relations Commission also referred to the board using the 60-day rule to change the terms and conditions unilaterally, but it also points out that the board did not wait for the 60 days in order to be up before they imposed some of these changes, which is against Bill 100, against the rules. The teachers grieved this and went, as I said, to an arbitration. The arbitrator ruled on behalf of the teachers. However, the board apparently failed to implement the terms of the arbitrator's award. They lost before the arbitrator, the arbitrator told the board to rectify the situation and they didn't do it. You can imagine how this would affect negotiations and the relations between the board and the teachers.

Then they point to the changes that the board did make properly according to the 60-day rule under the legislation and they say, "While this may be a legitimate exercise of rights available to a board, the timing and nature of the changes in the midst of mediation have placed barriers to achieving a resolution." In other words, relations were bad between the two parties. "Further, there have been public statements of distrust and disrespect on the part of both parties."

For those reasons, the ERC concluded that it was unlikely that further negotiations would lead to an amicable agreement and "that the continuation of the strike," which was likely, "will place in jeopardy the successful completion of courses of study of the students affected by this dispute."

What is interesting, though, is that the ERC then went on to make a recommendation to the Minister of Education and Training on how to deal with this situation.

We must keep in mind that today is one day before the Education Relations Commission no longer has a quorum because this government hasn't appointed the people it's supposed to appoint to the commission.

This is what the Education Relations Commission recommended to the minister: that the teachers would have to go back to the classroom, but also that, "The collective agreement that expired on August 31, 1996, shall be deemed to continue in force until replaced by a new collective agreement reached by the parties" through negotiation or "awarded by a board of arbitration."

1650

Today, when we met with the representatives of the ministry and the minister's office to discuss how the minister was going to respond to this recommendation of the Education Relations Commission, we were presented with a piece of draft legislation. That draft legislation differed substantially from this recommendation of the Education Relations Commission. The draft did say that the government would reimpose the collective agreement that expired on August 31, 1996, but it also had included two other clauses which essentially said that the rollbacks, the cuts, the board had made since August 31,

1996, would also continue in force, which is not what the Education Relations Commission recommended.

When presented with that, we in the opposition made clear to the government that we would not facilitate the introduction of this legislation today, because of the difference between what was recommended by the Education Relations Commission and what the government was proposing. As I said earlier today, I've recognized that the minister withdrew those two objectionable clauses. What is now being proposed in the legislation before us is the imposition and continuation of the collective agreement that expired on August 31 until it is replaced by a new agreement, either negotiated or arbitrated, which is what was recommended by the commission. I recognize that the minister has done that.

Let's understand that in having to deal with this legislation today we are having to deal with a failure. We're having to deal with the failure of the two parties, the board of education and the teachers' union, to negotiate a collective agreement amicably.

**Mr Peter L. Preston (Brant-Haldimand):** Get rid of both.

**Mr Wildman:** I don't participate in this debate in any way celebrating a situation like this. This is a sad day. It's far better for both sides to negotiate an amicable agreement. But I point out again that perhaps part of the reason the board had all of these rollbacks was not because it just decided unilaterally that it had to take out a lot of money from the existing collective agreement but because it was faced with cuts from the minister; not 1.8%, as he has argued, but as his own ministry staff have admitted, about 5.5% in grants last year — \$400 million across the province. That probably is the reason the board had to get this money out of the collective agreement, because the board was cut in its grants from the government and couldn't do it, I guess, unless it increased taxes substantially, and the government has made it clear that it doesn't want boards to do that.

The member for Brant-Haldimand interjected when I was speaking and said that maybe we should get rid of both parties, the board and the teachers' union. I guess this is in the context of what the minister is now proposing to do with education in Ontario. He is indeed talking about amalgamating boards, but more than that, he's talking about taking control of education away from local authorities, taking away local accountability. He's transferring \$5.4 billion — although in the House for some reason every now and then the ministers say \$6.2 billion, but it's actually \$5.4 billion — off the residential property tax and saying that the government will take control of funding and expenditures in education.

Keep in mind that the minister himself said there will be further cuts in 1998 and he also said he needs about \$1 billion. Mark my words, in 1998 boards across Ontario are not going to get \$5.4 billion more in grants from this government; it's going to be somewhat less. It may be \$4 billion, it may be \$4.5 billion, I don't know, but that's where the cut is going to come. We're going to see further cuts next year. The local boards, the bigger amalgamated boards, are going to be faced with the situation where they're going to have to cut programs, they're going to have to cut staff, they're going to have



to increase class size even further. But they won't have any real control. They won't have any local taxing power. So I don't think that's really a solution.

I believe in local autonomy. I believe in local accountability. I think education should not be funded from the property tax, but I don't think it's a solution to say that the decisions are going to be taken completely to the centre and controlled by the provincial government.

That raises the question of how we will negotiate collective agreements with teachers in that situation. It's a little unclear at this point what the government intends to do. The Minister of Education and Training appointed Mr Paroian to study this. He went around the province and listened to presentations and he berated board representatives who appeared before him and said that Bill 100 worked well. He said: "That's not what I want to hear. What are you doing coming here and telling me that?" He expected it, I guess, from the teachers' federations but he didn't expect it from the boards. He should have expected it from the boards because 97% of the collective agreements have been reached without disruption since Bill 100 became law. But he made recommendations and he recommended significant changes in teacher collective bargaining.

The minister has mused since that time about perhaps taking away the right to strike from teachers. Well, mark my words: If that is the agenda of this government, we're going to see massive problems in teacher collective bargaining. It won't be Lennox and Addington alone; when you have a major problem it may be province-wide, if it's province-wide bargaining. Instead of having a number of students like the students in Lennox and Addington having their educational year disrupted, it may be the students right across Ontario. That's hardly a solution.

If the suggestion is to take away the right to strike completely, then we are going to have serious problems. We're going back to the old days before Bill 100 when there were all sorts of disruptions. Why do you think the Bill Davis government passed Bill 100? To resolve these problems, and it has worked. It's been a problem in places like Lennox and Addington, I admit, and that's why we're dealing with this legislation today, but do not take Lennox and Addington as the norm; they are the exception, a most unfortunate exception.

I am alarmed by the minister's statement when he introduced this legislation, where he said he was reviewing teacher collective bargaining and he was going to be bringing in changes. If the minister means by that he believes the disruption in Lennox and Addington is the norm rather than the exception and he's going to use that as an excuse for removing the right to strike, we're going to have serious problems between teachers and the provincial government, and there are going to be a lot of students affected in that kind of situation.

I don't know why, when the government introduced the draft legislation to us, the government introduced a draft that included rollbacks, instituting rollbacks the board had brought in and which the board had been criticized for by the Education Relations Commission. It's beyond me. We made it very clear that if the government intended to proceed in that manner, we would not

facilitate the introduction of the legislation today, and I'm glad to see that has been removed from the bill.

There are a couple of other things I'm concerned about. I mentioned that as of tomorrow the Education Relations Commission no longer has a quorum because the government hasn't appointed members. There are two who haven't been appointed, one more whose term runs out tomorrow, and as of that time they don't have a quorum. It's because the Education Relations Commission, in its letter to the minister, recommended that arbitration be brought in in the legislation, but it recommended that legislation be brought in under the aegis of the ERC, that the Education Relations Commission would be the one to which the parties would propose arbitrators and make proposals for bringing the dispute to an end. In the legislation, in the bill, it's not the ERC that does this. 1700

It's quite unprecedented for the minister to take the kind of power he is taking in this bill in these kinds of situations. In the bill the minister — or the Lieutenant Governor in Council, meaning the cabinet, the minister — will appoint the arbitrator. It does make provision for the two sides to come together to agree on an arbitrator, but if they can't agree the minister will still appoint the arbitrator.

This hasn't been done in this way, to my knowledge, for 20 years. The last time it was done I think was in a Kirkland Lake dispute in 1976. Certainly the last three times that there's been legislation recommended by the ERC to bring an end to a dispute between boards and teachers, the Education Relations Commission has been responsible for the arbitration and for ensuring it operated well.

It's very strange too in that this legislation talks about a single arbitrator that will be appointed by the minister. In nearly all the disputes I know of that have been dealt with in this manner under the Education Relations Commission there's been a panel set up, a panel of three. The teachers would appoint one arbitrator, the board would appoint one arbitrator, and then they would attempt to come to an agreement on the chair for the arbitration panel, a three-person panel. If they couldn't come to an agreement on the chair, then the Education Relations Commission appointed the chair of the three-person arbitration panel.

Why is it that this bill doesn't do it that way? I don't understand why. It may be because the ERC doesn't have a quorum tomorrow so therefore they can't do the job. Maybe that's the reason. If that's the case, then the solution would have been for the minister to get on his horse, get the appointments made, get the orders in council through cabinet and get the ERC in a position that it could do the job.

My concern is that the government may in fact be intending to eliminate the Education Relations Commission. Perhaps that's their agenda. Perhaps that's what they're about as part of their response to the Paroian report and the changes they may be going to bring in in teacher collective bargaining. Maybe they're going to eliminate the Education Relations Commission. Perhaps that's why they haven't made the appointments. If that's the case I'm very, very concerned, because the ERC has



done a very good job for 20 years: a lot of different people appointed to the commission, but they've done a very good job over that period of time under three different parties in power in Ontario.

There's something else that bothers me seriously about this legislation. There are penalties included in this legislation for teachers who do not comply with the terms of the bill. In other words, I suppose if some teacher or group of teachers were to say, "We're not going back to work despite the fact that this has been passed," there are penalties included. But the penalties in this piece of legislation are fines. This is unprecedented. To my knowledge this has never been included in this kind of legislation before. Frankly, in most cases it hasn't been necessary. The teachers and the boards have agreed on an arbitration panel and they've proceeded through the process and the teachers were back in the classroom and so on. I would hope they're not required this time. But why is it we have this punitive measure put in the legislation?

#### *Interjection.*

**Mr Wildman:** The member for Fort William makes a suggestion which probably makes sense. If they were intending to impose the rollbacks that the board had brought in, maybe they were afraid that would inflame the situation to the point where teachers might defy the legislation and therefore they needed penalties like this in the legislation. At any rate, those two provisions imposing the rollbacks have been taken out, so hopefully this will not come into effect. I certainly hope not.

It doesn't help, though, to have this kind of thing in the legislation if you're trying to resolve a very difficult situation. Obviously, the teachers are going to react against this kind of thing. It's holding a club over their heads and most people don't react well to that kind of thing.

We are not in favour of, and I don't think any member of the House is in favour of legislating agreements or legislating binding arbitration. All of us would prefer to have parties negotiate in good faith and come to agreements that benefit each party. Each usually has to give up something, each party has to feel they've won something, and in coming to a mutually acceptable agreement, without disruption, then the most important person in the education system, the student, is not harmed. The student's interests are looked after by both parties, the board and the teachers.

I regret very much that we are here dealing with this piece of legislation today. I regret that the situation in Lennox and Addington has deteriorated to the point where the Education Relations Commission determined there isn't likely to be a settlement in the dispute. I regret very much that the Education Relations Commission came to the conclusion that the students' progress was in jeopardy.

I have had situations like this — not very many, very few actually, one or two in the 20 years I've been in the Legislature — in my own constituency. I know the kind of difficulties that produces. I know, particularly in small towns and rural areas, the kind of relationships that are harmed by these kinds of disputes. It's very difficult for a community. I think I have some idea of what the local MPP has been experiencing. I think I have an idea of

what the teachers are going through. I think I have an idea of what the trustees are experiencing. But most important, I think I have a very good idea of the problems and concerns and uncertainty that face the students and their parents.

I want to say sincerely to the members across the aisle that if the agenda for the government is to take away collective bargaining rights from teachers, we are all going to face these kinds of problems in our constituencies. That will not be good for education; it will not be good for students. We will all lose.

Education of kids is too important a process for us to jeopardize it because of some ideological position taken. It is too important to be jeopardized by a government that says it is going to deny the free collective bargaining rights of a profession, not because it's going to help financially, economically, but because they have an ideological position they want to impose.

I implore the members of the governing party to look at the history of Bill 100, to recognize that the situation in Lennox and Addington is an exception, a tragic, unfortunate exception, that most collective bargaining processes between teachers and boards across Ontario — not just most, 97% of them — are resolved amicably, without lockout, without strike, without putting students in the middle. I think it's most unfortunate if we use Lennox and Addington as an excuse for some other wider legislation that will cause disruptions across Ontario.

1710

I heard one member say, "What about work-to-rule?" Let me tell you that if this government is determined to take away the free collective bargaining rights of teachers, not only to bargain for their own terms and conditions of employment but to bargain for the improvement of the educational environment of their students, then we're going to have a lot more than just collective work-to-rule programs in Ontario; we're going to have a very difficult, serious situation, so I won't repeat that I find it most unfortunate that we are here.

I hope that the two sides in Lennox and Addington will be able to reach an agreement. It is allowed for under this legislation. They can still proceed. Hopefully through negotiation or through arbitration they can reach an agreement. I hope that happens. I hope the fact that the proposal is for a two-year agreement rather than one year as the board was asking, I understand, will help to cool the inflamed situation so relations can improve between the employees and the employer and between the two parties and the rest of the community. I'm pleased that they're talking here about a two-year agreement rather than one year.

That raises another question. If under Bill 104 this board is no longer going to exist, if it's going to be amalgamated, then that raises all of the questions about what's going to happen about collective agreements. The so-called Education Improvement Commission — or eek, as I call it — is going to have an enormous task before it in trying to meld very different collective agreements and trying to deal with different seniority lists and trying to deal with layoffs of certain teachers, I suppose early retirements, changes in terms and conditions in pay rates. I hope that process is not just going to lead to further



problems in Lennox and Addington and the other communities, the other boards in the area with which it is going to be amalgamated, because that's possible.

In British Columbia, where they lowered the number of boards a number of years ago — there were fewer boards in the first place and they lowered the total number by a lot less than we're talking about in Ontario — it took three years to put the system in place to deal with all these problems and difficulties. This government is talking about doing it in a few months. I fear what effect that will have.

If you were going to move to amalgamation, it wasn't necessary for you to have it in place by this fall for the next municipal election; you could have done it for the subsequent municipal election and you could have done it in a much more orderly fashion and got a lot of these problems resolved in a more orderly way.

But the problem the government had, of course, is they weren't just talking about amalgamating boards; they weren't talking about finding some sort of efficiencies through amalgamations alone. What they were talking about is taking control of the system away from local authorities and taking another \$1 billion out of the system. They had to do that in a hurry because the Premier has stated he wants to move up his income tax cut for the wealthy. So you had to get \$1 billion out of education, you had to get \$1 billion out of health and you had to get \$1 billion out of other community services like welfare and so on this year; you had to do it this year. So I hope that EIC is not going to be causing all of us to utter that kind of guttural sound in future in Ontario, but it may be going to, and it won't be E-I-C, it'll be e-e-k.

I regret, as I've said a number of times, that we're here. I recognize that the government made changes in the draft of the bill. I hope we aren't going to face serious disruptions across Ontario because of the rest of the government's agenda to take so much money out of education, to harm classroom education for students across Ontario and to perhaps remove the free, democratic collective bargaining rights of teachers across the province. I regret the fact that the government is intent on removing local accountability and local autonomy at a time when I think all of us who are interested in education should be able to have a say and influence what happens for our kids in our communities.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Questions or comments?

**Mr Gary Fox (Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings):** I wish I could say I'm pleased to speak on this legislation introduced —

**The Acting Speaker:** There's a two-minute response before rotation of speeches. Do you want to give a two-minute response?

**Mr Fox:** No, I go to the debate. Sorry.

**The Acting Speaker:** We just have to go through the rotation. Two minute responses? The member for Fort William.

**Mrs McLeod:** I want to make it clear, particularly to the anxious parents in Lennox and Addington who may be watching this debate and who may not understand the way in which the procedures of the House are carried out, that there is all-party agreement to have a vote on second

and third reading of this bill before 6 o'clock this evening and before the House adjourns for the evening. So this bill will be brought forward.

The reason we felt it necessary to have a debate about the bill, which in itself might be somewhat unprecedented in back-to-work legislation, is because there was so much evidence earlier in the day of other agendas of the government than those related specifically to the resolution of the issue dealing with the ERC's recommendations on jeopardy. I think it should have been a focus today exclusively on the concerns in Lennox and Addington. It should have been a concern exclusively on how this Legislature moves on the recommendation of the Education Relations Commission to deal with a finding that the students' year is in jeopardy. That should have been the sole focus of our debate. We shouldn't have faced a situation in which other agendas of the government were superimposed on that very critical issue for the people in Lennox and Addington.

I am concerned, and I think it's the reason why this debate has been so important, with the issues that have been raised by the member for Algoma, and that is not only the future of collective bargaining being very difficult with the amalgamated boards and the challenge of harmonizing all of the collective agreements, including this one that has to be concluded in Lennox and Addington, but that as of now there has been a climate that makes collective bargaining and resolution at the bargaining table almost impossible because of the powers that will be given to the Education Information Commission and because they will undoubtedly be imposing limitations on school boards that will force either a reduction in services or the efforts to find a reduction in costs at the bargaining table. I can only appeal to the Minister of Education —

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you.

**Mrs McLeod:** — who is well on his way to creating another crisis, to attempt to deal with this —

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time is up. Further questions or comments?

1720

**Mr Len Wood:** Briefly, I just wanted to say that the member for Algoma did an excellent job over the last half-hour or 45 minutes that he was discussing this piece of emergency legislation that was brought in so the students in this particular area are not going to lose their year.

We know that education in 1997 and 1998 is going to be — the parents are going to be very much concerned as they take \$1 billion or \$2 billion out of education, with rumours that further legislation is going to be brought in by this government that is going to affect collective bargaining for all teachers right across this province.

I'm concerned, as a father of two daughters who are teaching, one in Hamilton and one in Mississauga, about their future as teachers: How many students are going to be in the classrooms and what is going to be the atmosphere of all of the teachers and parents and students right across this province as the Minister of Education continues to make major changes? We see as they take the school taxes off residential properties across this province they are downloading more and more costs to all of the



municipalities that are going to drive up the cost of other services. Property taxes are going to go up.

In this particular case we are concerned, as the official opposition is concerned and the government is concerned, about the parents, the students and the teachers who are out there, that we have to have a debate in this Legislature in order to help resolve this labour dispute that is out there and is causing great concern.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** I listened very carefully to the member for Algoma's comments. His expertise and his familiarity with the issues are unquestionable. It's certainly unfortunate, indeed I suppose even beyond unfortunate, that a Legislature would be called upon to intervene in collective bargaining.

Having said that, I recognize that in this instance teachers have been stonewalled, have been stymied, have had every tactic used against them in what amounts to nothing more than the very worst of bad faith on the part of their board employer. You talk about irresponsible. Here's a board that's not going to exist in short order because this government has such disdain for local governance. Here's a board that isn't even going to exist by the time this government is finished with its dismantling of local governance of education.

At the same time, it would appear that here's a board that has very much picked up the theme of this Harris government that's designed to devalue the work that teachers and other skilled professions and helping professions do in our communities, devalue the work of public service workers, teachers included, that expects the teachers to pay for this government's irresponsible tax break to the very richest in this province. I think this government has shown an incredible lack of insight by its response in this particular matter. The issue is really one that's far broader and one that is going to have far greater consequences than we've seen to date.

**Mr Wildman:** I want to thank the member for Fort William, the member for Cochrane North and the member for Welland-Thorold for their comments. I would agree with the member for Fort William that people should understand why this debate is occurring and what the import of the debate is, recognizing that we do not support this kind of legislation and we regret the fact that this legislation is being introduced.

We recognize that students have been harmed and that the Education Relations Commission has ruled that their year might be in jeopardy and therefore the government should take action. We regret that the government has not used the Education Relations Commission as it might, and as was proposed by the Education Relations Commission, to help to resolve this dispute finally.

One of the members referred to this as a labour dispute. I might be tempted to call it a board dispute because of the kind of criticism that the Education Relations Commission has levelled at this particular board, but I recognize that the board is in a difficult position because of the cuts made by this government to education and that this board believes it has to take a substantial amount of money out of its collective agreement to, as the member for Welland-Thorold said, make the teachers pay for their tax cut to the wealthy, and so I regret that we are here.

I also am very concerned about what the future holds in the context of this government's agenda, as this government is determined to take another \$1 billion out of education and use the Education Improvement Commission, the amalgamation of boards, as a smokescreen for taking more money out of classrooms and hurting students. We are opposed to that and we will fight it with everything we have.

If this government is determined to take away the free collective bargaining rights of teachers to bargain for their terms and conditions of work and for an improved environment for students, we will fight that with everything —

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. Further debate? The member for Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings.

**Mr Fox:** Sorry I jumped in a little suddenly there, but I'm quite anxious to speak on this because it is of a grave concern in my riding with parents and students at this time. I wish I could say that I'm pleased to speak on the legislation introduced by the Minister of Education and Training, but I would really rather not have to. I wish this strike had never come about.

Introducing legislation to end a strike is a tough job for any government. Not only is it evident that the two sides in this dispute, the school board and the union, could not overcome their differences, but more importantly, it brings to light the people who have lost out due to the strike. The unions feel as though they were forced to make concessions and the school board feels they are ones who were forced to give in.

But let us not lose sight of the bigger picture and the reason that the Minister of Education and I and others are standing up today. The real losers in this strike are the students of Lennox and Addington County Board of Education. The teachers at Lennox and Addington County Board of Education walked off the job on December 9. As a result, the students have lost 29 instructional days. The students' school year is in extreme jeopardy. They know now that without legislation being passed today their year could be lost.

We can only imagine what each student in Lennox and Addington has thought about each morning since December 9: "Am I going to be able to finish my year? Am I going to graduate? Am I going to be able to go to college or university this fall? What about our summer jobs? How am I going to have time to work if I'm in school over the summer? Should I even bother to look for a summer job?"

What is happening here is that the students are being used as pawns in a dispute they care little or nothing about. I might also at this time bring to the attention of the House that these students in Lennox and Addington have no option but to attend school within their own county or board jurisdiction. They do not live in cities like Toronto or Ottawa, which would allow them to attend another school while the strike is on.

I personally know of many parents who have volunteered to help students with their independent studies. Some have even offered to take time off work to fill out the void in the classroom created by this strike.

On Tuesday of this week I presented a petition to the House. It took the organizers of the petition just 72 hours



to get over 1,100 names. This is quite a feat for a rural area where there are no large malls or mega-stores where the parents could stand and collect these names. This indicates just how much support there has been from the parents and students to do whatever it takes to get the teachers back where they belong: in the classroom.

1730

The two sides in this dispute are at an impasse. They are about as close to reaching agreement as they were on the eve of the strike. They have spent hours and hours arguing their points and trying to curry favour with the mediators, all this while every student in Lennox and Addington waits at home until both sides reach an agreement.

After assistance by the Education Relations Commission to resolve the differences of the boards and the unions, the ERC announced to the Minister of Education and Training that the school year of the students would be in jeopardy if the strike continued. The ERC advised the Minister of Education to legislate the teachers back to work.

All elected members of Parliament in this House today represent parents and students. We all know how important education is. Education is the passport to opportunity for our youth. It is the vehicle for arming our students to compete in today's complex and challenging global economy. That is why access to education is a right for all Canadians.

What are we as elected officials supposed to do about this situation? What about our obligation to these students? Didn't we as lawmakers introduce legislation that demands every child in Ontario must stay in school until they are 16? Don't we as legislators continue to fight for the best quality of education for our Ontario students? How then can we sit back and allow teachers to leave the classroom and refuse to teach students?

I stand here today as your colleague to ask every member for your help. We all know the importance of education to our youth. We all know the outcome of students losing their year. I appeal to all members here to put their weight behind this bill and see it passed today without delay. The parents and students of Lennox and Addington thank you.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Conway:** The member makes a very legitimate plea and a request that I certainly intend to positively respond to, as I expect the House will unanimously. There is, particularly for a relatively newly elected member in this assembly, no hell like being the local member living through a school strike. I'm telling you, it is a misery that is not to be endured if it can be avoided.

I see the member for Guelph here. I remember in my first few months as minister the then newly elected member for Guelph had the experience of being in the midst of what was one of the most acrimonious and I think one of the longest disputes in the province. I myself in — I was elected in 1975 — about 1977 or 1978 had a dandy, as my father would say, in Renfrew. It went on for weeks and it certainly was one of the most miserable experiences I've ever had as a local member.

Everyone wants to do the right thing, everyone wants to accommodate the students, but the interests sometimes

of the taxpayer as employer and the interests of the teachers are not always one and the same. I just make the point that Mrs McLeod made earlier, and I'm sure that Mr Wildman made in his remarks: Only Pollyanna would imagine that there is some magical way to resolve this sometimes clash of different interests in a painless way. Bill 100 is certainly not perfect; it ought to be changed. But anybody who thinks that we can wave a magic wand and solve this clash of interests is perhaps Pollyanna's sibling.

**Mr Wildman:** I understand the position taken by the member and the plea he makes on behalf of the students and parents in his constituency. I would just reiterate that the Lennox and Addington situation, difficult as it is, is not the norm and should not be used as an excuse or a reason by the government to make wholesale changes in collective bargaining for teachers in this province, because both boards and teachers' federations will testify to the fact that Bill 100, over the last 20 years, has operated well to ensure that most teacher-board collective bargaining processes have been resolved amicably, without disruption for students. Nobody wants to see students brought into the middle of this kind of situation. Nobody wants students to feel the uncertainty and concern about the future and whether their year will be put in jeopardy. Teachers don't want that, trustees don't want that and certainly the students and their parents and the community don't want that.

But let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater in future in this House by bringing in wholesale changes to Bill 100 that will perhaps bring further disruptions across Ontario in education that will hurt many students, hurt teachers and hurt communities.

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** I rise today to respond to the excellent debate from the member for Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings. I know he's worked very hard on this issue. On Tuesday, as he mentioned, he presented a petition with 1,100 names of constituents of his from that area of his riding who were very concerned about the issue.

I know that yesterday he asked a question of the Minister of Education and Training regarding this issue. He really drove the point home in that question when he spoke about the girl who wants to soon graduate from Napanee District Secondary School, go on to Queen's University and eventually on to med school. We're talking about real students here and real lives that are being affected by this situation.

I just want to congratulate the member for his fine speech and for standing up for the students, families and communities within his area and to let him know I will be supporting this bill.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions or comments? Seeing none, the member for Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings, you may sum up if you like.

**Mr Fox:** I'd just like to say that it has been a big concern. The thing is, it started out with the parents and the students very concerned with the board of education and the teachers' union. But since nothing had happened, they came to me for support to get something happening here through legislation so that this could be finalized. I must say that the day before yesterday 90 calls to my



constituency office show that there was immense concern for what was happening. It has been averaging about 40 calls a day.

I'm very pleased that all parties here today have agreed to propose this legislation, but it is sad that we have to do this. The member for Algoma mentioned in an earlier statement that both parties were at fault here, the school board and the teachers' union. It's too bad it had come to this point where they hadn't been able to make an agreement so that we have to do this today. I appreciate what all parties are supporting here today.

1740

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Conway:** I will take a few moments this afternoon to join the debate and make some observations as a member and as a former Minister of Education. I heard the member for Algoma, not his entire remarks, but the member from South Hastings made the point a moment ago, that there were two parties to this and they were both to blame in some measure. I'm not in any way privy to the negotiations, though I do read the Tweed and Napanee newspapers and I drive through almost the entire length of Addington every week.

Have I wrinkled the linen here?

**Mr Wildman:** Don't take too long.

**Mr Conway:** I'll try not to take too long. I wouldn't want to take too long.

**Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa-Rideau):** You've never taken too long.

**Mr Conway:** Your Honour, I have never taken too long. I'll tell you one thing, I would have been very brief in your court. If I had to look at so formidable a chief magistrate as the member for Ottawa-Rideau, I probably wouldn't have dared open my mouth.

But I want to open my mouth briefly this afternoon on the matter before us, which is to end the dispute in Lennox and Addington. I said earlier this afternoon that one of the concerns I have here is that there appears to have developed over the last number of years some bad blood between these parties at the table, because Lennox and Addington has been experiencing some real difficulty in the last eight to 10 years.

I think the Education Relations Commission has observed in its January 29, 1997, letter to the Minister of Education that there have been two previous difficulties that have led to a withdrawal of services or an interruption in instructional time since 1986. I would repeat the point I made earlier that after this bill is passed today there ought to be a renewed effort by both parties to fix whatever the atmospheric difficulty is in that otherwise very sensible part of my region of Ontario.

I listened carefully to Mr Fox, who I know to be a very hardworking fellow. I hope I didn't hear him taking credit for the introduction of this bill today, although I know he has worked — I don't see our friend from Napanee here today, Gary, but I'm sure he's up in Denbigh doing important parish work.

The process has worked, apparently, under the terms and conditions of Bill 100. The impartial Education Relations Commission monitors these matters, and when it feels, as the impartial monitor, that the jeopardy point has been reached, it so recommends to the minister. That

seems to have happened. Today is January 30. This letter I have in front of me from the Education Relations Commission was dated yesterday, a finding of jeopardy was made and we have now a bill before us. How many days are we at now? We're at the 29th lost day.

The redoubtable Dr Bette Stephenson — and I want to say to this assembly, I have yet to meet a battler in this crowd who is half as tough as Dr Stephenson. I still bear the scars of battling Bette. I remember that in the Sudbury case in the early 1980s Dr Stephenson allowed a dispute. She was minister. I think the dispute went into nearly a 60th day — 55 or 60 days.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Conway:** Very well said, but for people like the previous speaker, there's some concern that any time lost is — well, yes, we all agree the Sudbury case was almost 58 or 60 days.

I'm told by everybody there's some deal I am breaking, so I want to simply say I'll be happy to support this bill and save some of my remarks for Bill 104.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Questions or comments? Further debate?

**Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre):** When our children disagree or argue or fight, our educators bring them together, sit them down and teach them to work out their differences peacefully, without violence and without disrupting the school yard or the classroom. They teach our children to compromise for the betterment of all. They teach them to think about how their actions affect others. They talk to them about being considerate of others. But most of all they teach them by example, because everyone knows that above all else children learn by following example. They're preparing them to go out and take over our world and hopefully improve it. Our educators spend years with our precious youth, ingraining the value of education, yet when unions and school boards disagree or argue or fight, the first thing to go out the window is education. That's the example we give our children. Disruption then becomes acceptable. Then it becomes every child for himself or herself. The irony of all this is not lost on our students. They know what's going on. They can spot hypocrisy: "Do as I say, not as I do."

What are they really learning? They're learning mistrust for authority, they're learning they don't matter very much, they're learning that you should try to get along and work out your differences peacefully only to a certain point. They're learning that their education can be sacrificed on the altar of collective agreements. I think we should start today and ask all the parties in education to commit that this will never happen again. I'm calling for a new paradigm in labour relations in Ontario. I'm calling for the very thing we teach our children: that we practise what we preach, that we work out our differences peacefully without affecting innocent children and their future.

We all know well the statistics about disputes between teachers and school boards. In the last 20 years there have been 17 million student days lost; in the case of the Lennox and Addington board, 29 days of instruction lost. What does that mean? My colleague the member for Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings pointed out that he's getting 40 calls each day from profoundly worried



parents. Others have faxed messages to our ministry. Students' educations and dreams have been put on hold. This is the reality of a dispute between a board and teachers. Students and parents are held hostage by two groups that should have the interests of their community as their priority.

In his review of the school boards' and teachers' collective negotiations process, Leon Paroian described this process as "hostage-taking." I find any hostage-taking in Ontario repugnant. At the end of the day it's the students who suffer in many ways. During his consultation, Mr Paroian listened to a principal in a Toronto elementary school. The principal told him that strikes harm students. He knew this because of regular testing done at his school. The loss of two or three or four weeks of instruction would undoubtedly represent a significant and measurable loss for students.

The students of Lennox and Addington have suffered too much already. Their dreams are on hold. Their education is in jeopardy. I urge members to support speedy passage of this legislation so that we can put these young people back on the track to success immediately.

**The Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Wildman:** I must say that the member for Halton Centre demonstrated the exact problem that I tried to refer to in my remarks, that one should not treat this difficult situation in Lennox and Addington as the norm. It is a very unfortunate exception to what happens in teacher-board collective bargaining in Ontario. That's why we are having an exceptional situation here today in the House, where we're dealing with very special, unfortunately repugnant, in my view, legislation. We've had to do it from time to time in the House in the past, but not very many times. The suggestion that Mr Paroian made that there were a certain number of hours lost in the last 20 years ignores the fact that 97% of teacher-board collective bargaining in Ontario has been settled amicably without strike or lockout in the last 20 years since Bill 100 was passed by the Bill Davis government. 1750

Don't throw out Bill 100 because of the minority number of situations that result in serious disruptions for students. None of us wants students to suffer, to be put in the middle of a dispute between teachers and boards. Boards don't want that, teachers don't want that and certainly the students and the parents don't. But don't say, "Okay, let's risk very serious disruptions right across Ontario between teachers and boards and teachers and the provincial government," by eliminating free collective bargaining rights for teachers, or changing substantially Bill 100, simply because on those few very difficult situations, there are disruptions for students. Don't do it.

In making a plea that this should never happen again, I hope that this is not a plea to deny the free collective democratic bargaining rights of teachers in this province. It must not be. This government must not do that. Please remember what Bill Davis knew after 1975.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** I know that I should respond to the previous speaker, not the person who just made questions and comments, but as a matter of fact the member for Algoma was able to stray somewhat from the previous speaker's comments. I don't

know how many people sitting in this chamber at this time have been a parent with their children at home during a secondary school teachers' strike. It's probably even more difficult during an elementary teachers' strike.

As a matter of fact, I say to the member for Algoma, 20 years ago was 1976. You referred to Bill 100 being passed in 1975. I was a trustee on the Peel board at that time and we did have a secondary school teachers' strike which, as I recall, went on for seven or eight weeks, and we did have children in secondary school at the time.

That is a devastating experience for everyone who's involved, particularly for those students who in the normal course of events really expect to have their grades met in one school year and not to have to repeat anything because of the interruption of a strike. Strikes where innocent third parties are involved, such as school children, elementary or secondary, are a very sad experience for everyone. We hope that there will be some satisfaction and some solution to look after all the concerns on all sides.

**The Speaker:** Response, the member for Halton Centre.

**Mr Young:** I say to the members of the official opposition and the third party that we are approaching a new millennium and our labour relations are stuck back in the 1930s, so I ask you to join us in renewing labour relations in Ontario, to allow for fair bargaining and fair settlements for all, with no further loss of instructional days for our children.

**The Speaker:** Further debate? Would the minister like to sum up?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** No.

**The Speaker:** Mr Snobelen has moved second reading of Bill 113. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? Agreed.

Mr Snobelen moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 113, An Act to settle The Lennox and Addington County Board of Education and Teachers Dispute / Projet de loi 113, Loi visant à régler le conflit entre le conseil de l'éducation appelé The Lennox and Addington Board of Education et ses enseignants.

**The Speaker:** Minister of Education and Training.

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I believe that the comments made by my colleagues have been noted. As I said earlier today, no one's heart is gladdened by this sort of legislation, but I appreciate the cooperation of everyone in this chamber in getting this legislation passed today.

**The Speaker:** Questions and comments? Further debate?

Mr Snobelen has moved third reading of Bill 113. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.



**Hon Mr Snobelen:** Mr Speaker, Her Honour awaits to give royal assent.

*Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario entered the chamber of the Legislative Assembly and took her seat upon the throne.*

ROYAL ASSENT  
SANCTION ROYALE

**Hon Hilary M. Weston (Lieutenant Governor):** Pray be seated.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** May it please Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly of the province has, at its present sittings thereof, passed a certain bill to which, in the name of and on behalf of the said Legislative Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

**Senior Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Journals (Mr Alex D. McFedries):** The following is the title of the bill to which Your Honour's assent is prayed:

Bill 113, An Act to settle The Lennox and Addington County Board of Education and Teachers Dispute / Projet de loi 113, Loi visant à régler le conflit entre le conseil de l'éducation appelé The Lennox and Addington Board of Education et ses enseignants.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** In Her Majesty's name, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor doth assent to this bill.

Au nom de Sa Majesté, Son Honneur la lieutenant-gouverneure sanctionne ce projet de loi.

*Her Honour was then pleased to retire.*

**The Speaker:** It now being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*



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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 3 February 1997

Lundi 3 février 1997



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 3 February 1997

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 3 février 1997

*The House met at 1331.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### SPECIAL OLYMPICS

**Mr Gilles E. Morin (Carleton East):** I'm very happy, on behalf of the Liberal caucus, to express our congratulations to all the participants in the Special Olympics World Winter Games being held in Toronto and Collingwood this week.

We are honoured as a community and as a province as a whole to be hosting some remarkable athletes from 80 countries from around the world. These young men and women have gathered here against considerable odds and sometimes limited expectations to show all of us the meaning of effort in adversity and of striving to be the best one can be. We can all take lessons from that.

I would like also to congratulate the organizers of this event. By your efforts, you show how meaningful this occasion is and how much fun we can have when we all share in the spirit of athletic achievement on such a grand scale together.

The best part of following Olympic events is the athletes themselves. We feel for each and every one of them, no matter what country they come from, as we see how much heart they put into their determination to win. They are all winners, those who come first, but no less those who put forward their very best effort when the eyes of the world are upon them. We are filled with admiration for these young athletes and salute their courage and achievement.

### FIRE SAFETY

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** This morning, Marion Boyd, the member for London Centre, and myself, along with others, joined Ontario's professional firefighters as they illustrated in a very graphic, a very visceral way how dangerous Bill 84 is going to be to our communities, to our firefighters and to the people they have so courageously and professionally served until now.

They point out that Bill 84, which this government wants to impose upon the communities of Ontario and on professional firefighters, is going to mean fewer firefighters when and where people in danger and people confronted by the tragedy of fire and other accidents and health-threatening situations need them.

It's going to mean that part-time employees are going to be replacing full-time professional firefighters. That

means people with only part-time experience and with less training are going to be in there in the thick of things when we need the skilled professional firefighter most.

It's going to mean, I tell you, privatization of fire-fighting services. It hasn't worked in the United States and it won't work well for the health and safety of communities and families here in Ontario.

It's going to mean an expansion of bureaucracy and it's going to mean an attack on the highly skilled levels of teamwork that professional firefighters have developed in every community across Ontario.

We were proud to join with firefighters in condemning Bill 84, condemning Harris and —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

### HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West):** Ontario is a refuge for people from all over the world. Many new Ontarians who live in my riding have escaped from religious, social and political persecution. They took refuge from tyranny, denial of human rights, deprivation of citizenship and franchise. They came to Ontario for equal opportunity and hope for their children, but they can't forget the turmoil at home.

It is difficult to contrast the freedoms enjoyed here with the denial of the most basic rules of democracy and the violence taking place in other parts of the world.

The Tamil community here in Ontario and in my riding is presently observing a week of fasting and prayer to express their distress over the lack of human rights for Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Several members of the Tamil community are in the gallery today: the Reverend Canon J. Francis Xavier, Anton Sinarasa Philip, and Mr and Mrs Thillaiampalam Thavarajam.

I support the Tamil community's call for peace and an end to injustice. Human rights are the most fundamental rights for everyone.

I would like to add my voice in this Legislature to the Tamil cries for justice, and I call upon my colleagues in this House to support the Tamils' desire for a lasting peace all over the world.

### KRISTA SEPP MEMORIAL AWARD

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** As I rise, the nominees for the 1997 Krista Sepp Memorial Award are being honoured and are celebrating the achievements of all the nominees.

The Krista Sepp Memorial Award was established back in 1991 in memory of Krista Sepp, who was murdered on February 3, 1989, while in the performance of her duties



as a child and youth counsellor in a group home in Midland after only nine days on the job. The award is given annually to celebrate Krista's life and to recognize the contribution of child and youth counsellors to young people and their families in Ontario.

The award recognizes the qualities Krista brought to her work, which included enthusiasm, empathy, high ideals, a thirst for knowledge and a capacity to apply theory to practice; the role of child and youth counsellors in delivering service to children and their families in Ontario; and the high-risk and often undervalued work of providing service to a population with many complex and painful problems.

The recipient of the fifth annual Krista Sepp Memorial Award is Ms Dorothy Morari, a child and youth worker from the George Hull Centre for Children and Families in Etobicoke. She was chosen by the committee from among 24 nominees across the province, including Ms Chantal Payette from the Roberts/Smart Centre in my riding.

I am certain that all the members of the Legislature will join me in congratulating all the nominees for being chosen and for their ongoing very valuable work they do on behalf of troubled children and youth and their families.

1340

#### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** One of the many negative results of the cuts to the family support plan has been that payors and recipients have suffered additional charges because of late or missing cheques. They are penalty charges on personal NSF cheques, late mortgage payments, late hydro, gas and phone payments.

The Attorney General claims he wants to compensate clients for these charges, but nothing is further from the truth. He has made no effort to contact FSP clients to advise they are entitled to help. The propaganda piece mailed to all clients in October had no information on compensation. The propaganda piece mailed out to MPPs two weeks ago again had no information. The FSP automated phone system does not provide a number to call for help on this matter. Only once, in response to a question I raised in this House, did the Attorney General publicly release a phone number clients could call for information. If you didn't watch question period that day or if you weren't quick enough to write it down, you're out of luck.

Worse still, Harnick is limiting compensation to clients whose cheques were delayed only in September and October. He has truly sunk to a new low. Trying to pretend that payment problems were limited to two months only does not make it so. Families who used to receive regular support payments are still calling my office because of late or lost cheques. It is clear the Attorney General is still not prepared to accept responsibility for his cuts or to pay people who should be paid. This minister should notify all clients that they might be entitled and he should accept —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

#### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today as the member for Scarborough Centre to mark a special occasion. This is the second year since the federal government declared February Black History Month. We in Ontario are fortunate to live in a province whose identity is firmly rooted in its rich heritage and strong cultural traditions.

People of many different backgrounds have contributed to this powerful legacy, including a vibrant African-Canadian community. I would like to take this opportunity to salute the important contributions this community has made in the areas of politics, the arts, education, medicine, indeed in all aspects of life in Ontario.

This month not only celebrates the outstanding achievements of black Ontarians, it goes far beyond, highlighting the value and importance of cultural sharing to a society and a nation.

Black History Week was first observed by Carter G. Woodson of the United States in February 1926. Now, more than 70 years later, hundreds of thousands are involved in the month-long celebrations not only here in Ontario but throughout North America.

I am pleased the Legislature is sitting at this time so that I have the opportunity to publicly recognize the celebration and this community for its accomplishments.

#### GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This government continues to waste taxpayers' money on an ad campaign that will cost in excess of \$2.3 million when it is complete. This ad is not only a waste of money but an insult to the people of Ontario.

Every time I see one of these ads that is costing us thousands of dollars, I'm reminded of the hospitals that the Minister of Health is closing in Sudbury and around the province, and the hundreds of nurses that this government seems to think are expendable.

When I look at the ads promoting efficiency in government I wonder what the regional taxpayers of Sudbury are thinking, when it will cost them \$1,600 more per household to pay for these service efficiencies; I wonder what the Hamilton-Wentworth taxpayers are thinking when it's going to cost them \$625 more per household for these service efficiencies. I wonder if they're thinking what I'm thinking: "Whom are they trying to fool with this ads?"

When I see ads promoting educational efficiency I think about the parents who have children with special needs, about the parents who have children in classroom sizes of 38, 40 and 42. I wonder what they're thinking.

Clearly this government is abusing its power; it's abusing its privilege. The next ads should promote, with the three monkeys, "See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil."

#### HUMAN RIGHTS

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I would like to join today with my colleague from Scarborough West in expressing my support to the Tamil community in Metro Toronto. I attended yesterday as well, with the member



from Scarborough West and other politicians and many people from the Tamil community who are deeply saddened and distressed by the kinds of atrocities that are taking place in their homeland — I note, along with the member for Scarborough West, that some of them are with us in the gallery today and they're very anxious to let people know about what is happening to human rights in their homeland.

I want to express to them today my sympathies and my support for this week of fasting and prayer to try to do their bit to end the kinds of atrocities and denial of human rights back in their homeland. It is very difficult for us here in Canada to even begin to imagine the kinds of difficulties and atrocities that their friends, their families are going through in their homeland. I applaud them for their community activism here in Toronto, for not forgetting their families and friends back home and for expressing their keen desire for the rest of us to join with them in calling for human rights to be brought back in their homeland.

### SPECIAL OLYMPICS

**Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea):** Today marks the first day of competition at the Special Olympics World Winter Games. For the first time, these games are being held in Canada, and I'm proud to say Ontario is the venue for all the events.

This is the largest international multisport event held anywhere in the world in 1997. More than 2,000 of the best athletes with developmental disabilities from 80 countries will vie for medals, including 82 from Canada and 33 from Ontario.

They will display their talents in figure skating, speed skating and floor hockey competitions at various locations in Metro Toronto; alpine skiing at Blue Mountain in Collingwood, and cross-country skiing at both Collingwood and Duntroon. There will also be two demonstration sports: eisstöck, a form of curling, and snowshoeing.

The Special Olympics World Winter Games, and the athletes in particular, help enormously to increase public awareness and understanding of people with developmental disabilities. The games also give athletes the opportunity to display their talents on an international stage, strive for personal best, and gain valuable cultural experiences from their peers. Special Olympians, through dedication and hard work, set a standard of excellence that inspires our youth to participate across Ontario.

I think I can speak for everyone in this House today when I say we're all very proud of our athletes.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the host communities of Toronto, Collingwood and Duntroon and to wish athletes participating at the Special Olympics World Winter Games the very best of success.

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

#### HOSPITAL FINANCING

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** I rise today to announce our govern-

ment's reinvestment of \$57 million in Ontario's hospitals. By strategically reinvesting —

#### *Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. There's opportunity for five minutes of response. You'll have to go one at a time then, but you can get your chance.

**Hon David Johnson:** By strategically reinvesting into hospital-based services, this government has once again put the needs of Ontario patients first.

In recent months, hospitals in some communities across the province have expressed concern that population growth and serving the needs of patients over large geographic areas have increased pressure on their budgets. I'm proud to say that this government is directly responding to these concerns by reinvesting \$57 million in hospitals that face unique and special circumstances.

Specifically, this \$57-million reinvestment includes \$18 million for hospitals which experienced higher than expected demand for services last year due to an increase in the population above the provincial average; \$14 million to recognize the special challenges facing northern Ontario hospitals which serve patients over large geographic areas; and a renewal of \$25 million in funding for those hospitals in the greater Toronto area with significant population increases.

This \$57-million reinvestment is coupled with the release of almost \$6.4 billion in 1997-98 allocations of funding to individual hospitals. These funding allocations were determined by a formula developed by the Ontario Hospital Association and hospital administrators in partnership with the government. The 1997-98 hospital allocations represent the second year of a multi-year funding allocation program put in place by this government to give hospitals greater predictability in funding.

This funding announcement is the latest in this government's continual process of reinvesting in Ontario's health care system. Last Friday I had the pleasure of announcing \$3.5 million to increase long-term-care services for Grey-Owen Sound, and another \$1 million for chronic care services in the Dufferin-Caledon Health Care Corp. The week before, I announced almost \$4 million for long-term-care services in Halton and Brampton.

The \$57 million is the first in a series of announcements for hospitals. In the weeks to come, I will be making announcements on hospital-based priority programs and services for Ontario patients such as cardiac care, cancer, dialysis and mental health.

1350

Putting the needs of Ontario patients first by reinvesting into front-line services is a top priority of this government. In fact, since coming to office in 1995, this government has announced an investment of over \$685 million into services for patients. This is a commitment we are proud to carry on even as the federal Liberal government continues to slash over \$2 billion from health and social transfers to Ontario.

#### *Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. It's Monday.

**Hon David Johnson:** There does seem to be a little sensitivity about mentioning that \$2-billion cut, doesn't there, Mr Speaker?



Reinvestments like the one I am making today, along with those that have come before and the many that will follow in the future, demonstrate this government's vision of an improved and integrated health care system, one in which all of the pieces in the system come together to provide patients with the right care at the right time and in the right place.

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** Our part-time Minister of Health should hang his head in shame for the statement he made today. The same day that he was traipsing around in Dufferin and Mississauga, holding up signs about reinvesting money, he was sending letters — this memo right here was being sent — to every hospital across this province, telling them how much money they were losing.

The largest cut in health care, the largest cut in hospitals, ever done in this province was enacted by this minister on Friday. This government, which has no shame when it comes to the sick and the elderly, has the audacity to come and reannounce some money to try to take the eyes off of what was actually happening. To see this government operate in such a cynical fashion is disturbing in the extreme.

Mr Minister, you should stand in your place today and explain how you've cut \$70 million more away than you took last year. Minister, tell the truth when it comes to the state of the province's hospitals. What you've done to nurses, to patients, to doctors in this province is unprecedented and it's your responsibility.

This government has gone through on its ill-thought-out plans to cut from hospitals before it has any kind of plan anywhere else in place. They're disturbing the ability of health care professionals of institutions in this province to provide even basic decent care. When we look at the announcement that this minister tried to distract us with, he tried to have us look the other way and not see the \$435 million that are threatening closures of hospitals in places like the Niagara region, the Hotel Dieu Hospital in St Catharines, West Lincoln Memorial Hospital, which tonight is having at least a discussion, trying to get in on this minister's decision, the Port Colborne General Hospital, Douglas Memorial Hospital in Fort Erie, Niagara-on-the-Lake General Hospital, and St Mary's General Hospital in Kitchener, all of these threatened by this minister's inaction in the face of a very, very bad plan.

We see the minister pretending that his announcements have something to do with fixing the problem when in fact they're directed elsewhere, and 84% of the money you're putting forward is going where? Surprisingly, to Tory ridings, to the people opposite who are using that little bit of money to buy off their constituents and try and quiet them down and not be worried about the fundamental fact that 6% of the money that used to be in the health care system is leaving, that it's going south with this minister and with that announcement.

When we look at the minister's pretence that the money he tried to allocate is going to do something about it, we see that the Ontario Hospital Association says on the same day that his approach makes no sense, that he should not be making these cuts while he has no plan for dealing with the province's hospitals.

This minister's standing up in this House today to try and make some political hay out of the fact that they're taking money away from people and giving a very small amount back will not make any difference to the well-being of patients in this province. Your efforts here today will not fool anyone.

Patients will be able to tell the difference. They're telling it now in the delays in emergency rooms, they're telling it now in the quality of care they're getting and they're telling it now because they know the difference when someone tries to pull this over their heads.

We know also that a situation has emerged in Windsor that people want to hear about.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** Minister, how could you stand in the House today and make this kind of announcement after you stood on your feet last week and said you were making an announcement soon that would address my problem in the Windsor area? When you released that list on Friday, Windsor was not on your list. You chose to ignore our area and you did that on purpose. How can you stand there today and fool the people of Ontario as though you really are reinvesting? In my community I am hearing daily, every hour, case after case of people who simply are not able to access good health care. It's a well-known fact: "Don't go to the hospital alone." We all know that.

Your announcements today do absolutely nothing for those of us who need it: the sick, the elderly, the seniors. Windsor is going to be the thing that brings you down, Minister, because it happens first in Windsor. We were the first to reconfigure, and to do that you took more money away. Now you're threatening to take even more money away.

What you're announcing today is simply not acceptable to anyone in Essex county. You left us off the list. Last week you said that you were making an announcement that would somehow address the problems for Windsor residents. Our people will not suffer this much longer. My phone has been besieged, but in a very short matter your phones too will be besieged, and we are looking for answers from our Minister of Health.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Remember St Catharines as well when you're trying to close hospitals.

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** You want us to remember St Catharines?

**The Speaker:** There's no such thing as six seconds of dead air, I take it.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** The Tories may have lost Paul Rhodes but they haven't lost their ability to spin a story to the people of Ontario. This is really quite a disgraceful exhibition of how this government is constantly trying to say to people, "Black is white; white is black."

This minister dares to stand in his seat and tell the people of Ontario that he is distributing \$61 million of new money when there is no new money at all. Every cent of this announcement comes out of the reductions that have happened to other hospitals, and those reductions range anywhere from 4% to 8%. Let the people of this province understand that the growth funds which are necessary — no one argues that where there's high demand in the north and in high-growth areas those needs



need to be met, but everyone must understand that those needs are being met at the expense of other people.

In my riding of London, when you add inflation in, the reductions happening to the London Academic Health Sciences Centre are about 10% of its budget, and that is going to make a huge difference to health care in my area. Every member in this House needs to understand that this announcement today is an effort on the part of this part-time Minister of Health to try and convince people that this government is not taking away dollars from health care.

The people of Ontario are getting very tired of this kind of show on the part of this government, and they know better. They know that people are being released too early from the hospital. They know that they as families, as communities are being asked to care for people because this government has gone ahead with reducing those budgets before restructuring is completed, before the reinvestment into community services is complete.

My colleague the member for Windsor-Sandwich talks about the difficulty in her hospitals, and we all saw in the news the complete incompetence of this minister and ministry in terms of closing down the existing long-term-care facility that had worked well and had been a one-stop shop in her community and now has been destroyed by this government.

1400

The people of Ontario are getting very tired. They listen to people like David MacKinnon, the OHA president. The OHA has been very supportive of the need to restructure, but they have been very clear. This government continues again and again to withdraw money, to force hospitals to make decisions which may not be the best and most economic decisions, because what is to be put in place in terms of community care has not been announced. No one knows what those facilities are going to be, no one knows what that funding is going to be, and in the meantime, the patients of this province are being grossly disadvantaged. They're being endangered, and we are hearing story after story from community after community about patients who have been released too early and who have not been able to get the care they require within their communities.

When we talk about this government downloading, let's be very clear. It's downloading not only on to the municipalities but on to everyone in the community when it takes the care, the expert, committed care of professional health care workers, over 8,000 of whom have received their notices in the last nine months alone, takes those professional people out of the health care system and makes all of us responsible for the care of people whom we love and who we know need that care. And this minister dares to stand and try to disguise the taking of \$435 million out of the hospital system as a good-news item.

Let's be very clear. All of the announcements that this minister and this government have made about long-term care are already assigned dollars. This is not new money; this is money that has been announced for a long time, and they keep announcing and reannouncing and reannouncing and trying to fool the people of Ontario into believing this is new money that they're giving to the

care of the people of Ontario, and it is not the case. It can be shown again and again that this is part of the shell game that this Tory government is trying to put over on the citizens of Ontario, and they're going to find out that the citizens of Ontario are smarter than that. They understand that you cannot take money from one pocket, put it into another, put it into another, put it into another. Somebody loses, and it's the patient —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. It's time for oral questions. Leader of the official opposition.

Oh, I've got to read this into the record; I'm sorry. We'll restart the clock when the time comes.

## REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Pursuant to section 31(b) of the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table a response from the Honourable Gregory Evans, Integrity Commissioner, to the request from the member for Riverdale on whether the member for St George-St David had contravened the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, as a result of certain actions taken by his executive assistant.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### AMBULANCE SERVICES

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My first question is for the Minister of Health. On Friday, I attended our fact-finding hearings in Windsor. We travelled to Windsor, and at that time we heard from some ambulance attendants. They told us a number of things that were very interesting and raised some serious concerns on our part.

They said that people living in small and rural communities should be frightened by your mega-week announcements, especially seniors, who place a heavy reliance on the health care system. They said that downloading ambulance services was going to lead to different standards of health care based on the ability and the willingness of the local community to meet those needs. They said that we're going to create a fragmented system that's going to increase — this is very important — ambulance response times, and it could very well cost lives.

Minister, I want you to explain to the House now why it is that downloading ambulance services on to municipalities is good for the health care system.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** I will indicate to the Leader of the Opposition that the ambulance system I'm most familiar with, of course, is the ambulance system here in Metropolitan Toronto, and that system has been looked after by and has been the responsibility of the municipality for some considerable period of time.

The municipality has tailored that system here in Metropolitan Toronto and has made it work. The municipality took a system that many years ago was inadequate and tailored it to the needs of the people of Metropolitan Toronto and made it into an excellent ambulance system



with probably the best response time of any ambulance system in Ontario, I would venture to guess.

It's our view that municipalities across Ontario will do the same thing, that municipalities place a very high significance and priority on ambulance services and on health care services and will develop excellent ambulance systems for their communities.

**Mr McGuinty:** Just so the minister understands who is paying for what right now, at present the province funds ambulance systems in this province to the tune of \$300 million. Municipalities pitch in \$35 million. The minister should also know that David Crombie, the man who came up with the recommendations, recommended against downloading ambulance services on to the municipalities. In fact, what he recommended was that the province assume complete responsibility for all ambulance services throughout the province.

Let me tell you what else the ambulance attendants said. They said that your dumping is going to lead to an Americanization of our ambulance system. They said that patients could very well be forced to pay for every bandage and every splint used. They said that in the States, ambulances are like taxis: You pay according to how long you're in the darned things and the distance you travel. They told us that the average American ambulance ride costs \$700. Do you share the concerns of those ambulance attendants? Do you share those concerns?

**Hon David Johnson:** I share a number of the concerns of many people in the province of Ontario for health care. Health care is the number one priority of this government in terms of services.

I will indicate to the member opposite that I'm informed that Manitoba and Alberta, for example, are two other provinces wherein the municipalities run the land ambulance services, and that's what we're talking about, the land ambulance services. The province of Ontario will retain air ambulance.

Basically, this process will do a number of things: It will take the education tax, the huge, \$5.4-billion, growing to \$6.4-billion, cost of education off the residential property taxpayer.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. That's way out of order. I ask the member for Ottawa Centre to withdraw.

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** I withdraw.

**Hon David Johnson:** I appreciate that, Mr Speaker. It will take that huge cost, that enormous cost of education off the property taxpayer, and at the same time some services such as the land ambulance service are being shifted to municipalities. I am fully confident that those municipalities will have the financial wherewithal and the extreme interest to create excellent services for their communities.

**Mr McGuinty:** I'm going to ask another question of the minister. I'm going to ask him this time to speak to me as the Minister of Health, someone who is genuinely concerned about the delivery of quality health care in the province and not about juggling responsibilities from the province to the municipalities with a view to extracting another billion dollars. Let's talk now like the Minister of Health.

I am particularly concerned about the impact of the mega-week policies on seniors. Long-term care, ambulance care, social housing and property tax increases are all going to hit seniors hardest, and all this as you close hospitals and slash an additional \$435 million from their budgets.

Minister, you're creating a fragmented system. Everybody who has any real understanding of this issue knows we've got to integrate, not disintegrate. Transferring ambulance services to municipalities, contrary to Crombie's recommendation, is a process leading us towards disintegration.

**1410**

Ambulance service is not a big-ticket item. It makes sense that it stay in provincial control at least in small rural communities. I'm going to ask you again: Will you keep it at least in the case of small rural communities —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon Mr Johnson:** The province of Ontario will continue to set the service standards and the copayment rates for land ambulance services. I am confident that municipalities, when they're freed and when their seniors — I can tell you, if there is one issue the seniors have talked to me about over the years, it's about the cost of education on their residential property taxes. That has been the major concern.

The Liberals said they'd reduce the cost of education on the property tax for seniors. The NDP said they would reduce the cost of education on the property tax for seniors. What did they do? They both increased the cost on the property tax for seniors. This government, finally, has taken the cost of education off the property tax for seniors.

We have committed in health care \$17.4 billion. The Liberals said they'd be satisfied with \$17 billion in health care; we said no, at least \$17.4 billion for health care, for long-term care, for chronic care, for all the services needed by the people in Ontario.

**The Speaker:** New question, the leader of the official opposition.

**Mr McGuinty:** What seniors want to know is that the services they need are going to be there for them when they need them.

**The Speaker:** I need to know who the question is to.

#### CHILDREN'S SERVICES

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. In your 1996-97 budget you announced \$65 million in spending initiatives for Ontario children. Of that total, only \$5 million has been spent. That means there are 60 million — I wonder, Mr Speaker, if I might have the attention of the minister.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I think she knows.

**Mr McGuinty:** That means there are 60 million unspent dollars which had been promised by this government would be spent on children in Ontario, needy children in particular. Of the four programs announced, only one, the breakfast program — the least expensive one — has been delivered on. That promise has been delivered



on. There are three other programs which remain outstanding: One was going to address the problem of low-birthweight babies being born in Ontario today; one was going to deal with the huge number of children — there are 5,000 in Peel alone — who are waiting for speech pathology treatment; and then there was going to be the issue of child care.

Minister, I'm not asking you for new money. I'm simply asking you to deliver on a promise you made to Ontario kids. Will you do that?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** The honourable member across the way has certainly pointed out the importance of these three programs. That's why we made the budget commitments that we made, and we intend to live up to those budget commitments. As the Premier expressed late last week, we wish we could have moved faster on it. We have not been able to do that, but it remains a priority, and we are continuing to move on this because they are very important programs that we intend to deliver on.

**Mr McGuinty:** That response lends no comfort whatsoever to Ontario children who are in need right now. You made the promise nearly a year ago and you've delivered on less than 5% of it.

Let me tell you about the Mays. We raised the question of the Mays in this House some two months ago. We talked to you about the Mays, a young couple who had a son by the name of Adam. He's two and a half years of age, and they have spent some 16 months trying to get a speech pathologist for their son. Adam was not saying the kinds of things, the words he ought to have been saying at his age. His parents have been told it's going to take a year before they can get a speech pathologist to help them with Adam.

Minister, I'm going to ask you again. Your government made a promise to Ontario children. Why don't you deliver on those programs? The money has been allocated. You've got 60 days left before time is up on this. What are you going to do and how are you going to spend it?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** We've made a commitment; we intend to deliver on it. Unlike other governments, that money is not going to miraculously disappear into some other pot at the end of the fiscal year. Our commitments stand.

I'll forgive the honourable member if he doesn't understand that in some cases we've had to work with the communities to try and allocate some of this funding; for example, through the district health councils on the speech-language pathologists. I think if we were not to have done that, we would not be doing our job properly, because we need that community input into the making of these decisions. Our commitments stand.

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, I've said this in this House before. The darnedest thing about kids is that they don't put together convoys of buses and circle Queen's Park, they don't write us, they don't phone us, they don't retain lobbyists to advance their cause in the House, so we all have a special obligation but the government especially has a special obligation to look out for Ontario kids.

Let's talk, just for a moment, about the problem of low-birthweight babies being born in Ontario. The minister will understand very well that those children are, from

the outset, behind the eight ball in terms of their health care prospects for the rest of their lives. Part of your money was going to be dedicated to addressing this issue.

I'm going to ask you one more time, Minister: Either admit that you don't intend to keep the promise you made to Ontario kids — and forget about municipalities and other agencies that are involved with this; you made the promise to them — either admit that you're not going to deliver on that promise or promise right now and tell us how you're going to spend the \$60 million that you promised would be spent between now and the end of two months from now.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** We of course have a commitment to children. We believe it is a special obligation. Perhaps the honourable member believes that he needs children to — he's saying that children don't get on the phone and therefore they're not heard. Maybe that's what it would have taken for his government. That's certainly not what it takes for our government.

One of the things we are doing is working with Ottawa and the other provinces on bringing in an integrated child benefit. There's been some remarkable progress on that particular initiative. It's an extremely important initiative. That's one thing we are doing. We are working with our municipal partners and the child care community to ensure that child care support will be there for those families that need it.

One of the improvements we've made is that it is going to be a mandatory program for those municipalities. We are working with the district health councils on the speech-language pathology support because that is very important as well.

We are going to deliver on the low-birthweight Healthy Babies initiative because we recognize that investing money at that low end, at young children, is very important. Much of the \$15 million we put out earlier this month is going into —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. New question; third party.

#### CHILD CARE

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is for the same minister and follows along the same lines. This government makes a lot of announcements about children but then the money doesn't appear. We know that in three of the four programs you announced last spring in the budget, no money has been allocated, but the really glaring problem is in child care. The finance minister said in the speech, "[W]e will increase the province's support for child care, bringing it to the highest level in the history of the province," and you talked about an additional \$40 million for child care.

But we've called around to municipalities and we've asked child care groups if any of them have been able to access this \$40 million, and what do we find? We find that you've set up a series of catch-22s. Can you explain to people across this province how it is that thousands of child care spaces have disappeared in this province over the last year, yet this \$40 million you promised is still sitting there and none of it has been allocated? Can you explain that?



**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** If there are thousands of child care spaces disappearing across this province, it is not because of the actions of this government. One of the problems we are hoping to fix through the Who Does What initiatives is those municipalities who are not picking up on child care support. There are millions of dollars of provincial money we are prepared to invest in child care for fee subsidies and municipalities have not picked up on those subsidies. Therefore, they've had people in their communities —

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** How much Jobs Ontario Training money did you cut, Janet? Come on.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** What happened to the Jobs Ontario programs you cut?

*Interjections.*

1420

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Minister?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The opposition mentions the Jobs Ontario spaces. Perhaps if they had planned those Jobs Ontario spaces as a sustainable program, there wouldn't have been any challenges or difficulties when we took over as the government.

I repeat, we have child care subsidy money on the table and municipalities have not picked all of it up. That is why, as we go through the Who Does What initiative, we believe we will be able to work with those municipalities to increase those very important employment supports —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Supplementary?

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** When a government tells different stories to different people depending on who it is speaking to, it will eventually catch up to it, and it's catching up to you. I have asked you about this \$40 million time and time again in this House and you've said, "and we have set out the \$600 million; we've put forward proposals on how that \$600 million is proposed to be spent" — meaning your child care reform proposals — "We are now consulting on those proposals before we make decisions." That's Hansard, October 8. Last week you told the media that the \$40 million was still there if municipalities wanted to apply for it. Your Premier went a step further and he blamed municipalities for not picking up that \$40 million and that's why it remained unspent; it wasn't your government's fault. You froze that.

The truth of the matter is even worse. There are up to 9,000 spaces that municipalities have cut because of downloading and cuts in transfers and the pressures on them. That means you're going to actually spend less this year than the previous government spent, not more. That's a cut to child care. Will you admit that when we see the actual spending for 1996-97, it will show fewer spaces and less money spent on child care?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** We have always been very clear that up to \$600 million is available in this province for child care, that the new money we set forward for child care would be spent, pending the decisions that came out of the child care review and pending the decisions that came out of the Who Does What exercise. We clearly telegraphed that in the report, that there were those two processes that were going on and that those decisions on

the new money would be allocated subject to the conclusions of both those processes.

In addition to that money is the money the province has on the table for fee subsidies, which municipalities have not picked up on. That is not a new problem. I remind the honourable member that this was something her government experienced as well. That is one of the reasons we have acknowledged very clearly that child care support in this province needs work to make sure that it is there, so that there is not unused money on the table when there are lineups in some communities for fee subsidies.

**Ms Lankin:** Minister, you just confirmed, then, that your Premier's statements were not factual when he blamed municipalities for not picking up that \$40 million and saying it wasn't your government's fault. That runs absolutely contradictory to what you just said, which was that money wouldn't be available until after Who Does What and child care reform proposals were decided on, absolutely contradictory. Admit he was wrong.

Let me take it a step further. You've also admitted that municipalities are not picking up on the money that's there. Why? They don't have the room in their budgets. As we speak, given that you've downloaded 50% of the costs coming up, given that they know their costs are going to be exploding with all the downloading, they are making decisions on their 1997 budgets right now and I'm telling you I know from calls across this province they are looking at cutting child care spaces and child care funding so they don't have the burden when you make it mandatory in 1998. What are you going to do today to make sure we do not lose dollars or any regulated child care spaces in 1997? How do you make it mandatory today, Minister?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** First of all, I would like to be very clear: There is no disagreement, there is no inconsistent message here, and no, we are not blaming municipalities. I am simply stating what has been a fact during this government's life and during the life of the government opposite, when it was in place. One of the things we are very conscious of is the financial situation of municipalities. That's why we have removed education off the property tax.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Minister?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Thank you very much. That is also one of the reasons why we have something like \$2.5 billion worth of assistance for municipalities to ensure that they do not run into any difficulties in meeting their obligations.

Finally, when we move forward through the Who Does What exercise —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Come to order. Thank you. Minister?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. The honourable member asks a very important question about how we will be proceeding with calculating child care services. I recognize that municipalities are looking at their budgets, looking at what they think will be happening in the future, but we are saying to them that the number of spaces, the current system that is in existence now, is the system upon which we are planning.



## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My next question is to the minister of Municipal Affairs. I would just say to the Comsoc minister that I think we heard today the government's next spin strategy: When child care isn't available, it's the fault of municipalities; when ambulances don't work, it's the fault of municipalities; when libraries aren't open, it's the fault of municipalities.

Minister of Municipal Affairs, in response to a question from my colleague the member for Dovercourt on the megacity hearings you said, "If they want to have the committee move around Metropolitan Toronto, I certainly wouldn't have any objections to that," yet today your members on the committee voted not to move around the city of Metropolitan Toronto to hear people.

My question to you is, will you tell your colleagues on the committee that they're wrong? Will you tell your colleagues on the committee that you believe they should be moving around Metro Toronto to hear people so that all people in Metro Toronto can be heard?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I concur with the decision that was made by the standing committee this morning that the most appropriate location to hold the hearings is here. If people want to express their views, if people want to demonstrate, there's room at Queen's Park for 8,000, 10,000 maybe even 200,000 people to protest. It depends on who does the counting, mind you.

The House is in session. The committee is here. The members have to be in the House. All the Hansard material is here. The most appropriate place to carry out these hearings is right here in this place.

**Mr Hampton:** Another flip-flop by the Minister of Municipal Affairs. By the way, Minister, we understand why you don't want to go to the city of Scarborough or the city of North York: because we know and you know that thousands of people will be at those meetings and thousands of people will come out to tell you that you're wrong, and you don't want to hear them.

Your committee also voted essentially today to not let all the people who want to address the committee appear before it. You've already got more than 1,200 people who want to appear before the committee, yet the time you have given it would only allow fewer than 600 to be heard. With today's decision you're essentially saying to people that you really don't want to hear from them on the megacity proposal, that you don't want to hear their opposition.

Minister, in order that democracy can truly be served, in order that people can be heard, will you tell your government colleagues on that committee to reverse their decision so that all the people who want to express their opposition to your megacity proposal will indeed be heard? Will you do that?

1430

**Hon Mr Leach:** To the leader of the third party, there have been more hours set aside for this committee — 105 hours far exceeds the hours that have been set for almost any other committee that this Legislature has heard.

As for travelling around, I think it's important that people have the opportunity to be heard. I don't think it

matters where they're heard. If it's here, they have access to it.

What we're interested in is ensuring that everybody has an opportunity to express their views. Now, if you wanted to line up a thousand people and they all gave the same answer, I don't think that accomplishes very much. Obviously, the supporters of the proposal could come in and make the same statement over and over again. What we want to do is make sure that the views of all the groups and all the individuals are heard, and we intend to do that.

**Mr Hampton:** What is very clear is that this minister is making a sham out of these hearings, and they've only just begun. He doesn't want to go outside this building to hear people, and frankly he doesn't even want to hear over half the people who have already submitted their names. So you're making a sham of it before it's even begun.

Minister, there are many, many people who are appearing. One of the people who is going to appear at 3:30 this afternoon is Jane Jacobs, who has been described as the most important thinker on urban issues in this century. She's going to be before the committee. Among other things, she's authored the book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. She doesn't agree with you on your megacity concept. Would you at least go listen to her? Would you at least listen to her concerns about what you're doing with this megacity issue?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I know I'll be able to hear Jane Jacobs. It is on television, it is taped, and I'll make sure that I hear the comments she makes. My schedule after question period today doesn't allow me to be in personal attendance, but I assure the member opposite that I will read her comments, I will view the tape and make sure that we are aware of what she's saying.

He points out a couple of people who are opposed. He should have been there this morning to hear Alan Tonks say that he's in favour of amalgamation.

## HOSPITAL FINANCING

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** My question is to the Minister of Health. On Friday, you had some media conferences in places like Mississauga and Shelburne and you tried to make people believe that somehow hospital patients were getting more money. At the very same time, while you were out there standing with your signs and your props, your ministry was sending a different message, a depressing message, to hospital administrators across the province telling them that you are cutting \$435 million.

Minister, you are taking away \$70 million more than last year. It's the largest cut to take place to hospitals in this province ever, seven times as much as you pretend to be putting back in. The cynical misdirection that you're doing in this announcement has never been seen before.

When you look at sending 84% of that money to Tory ridings, when you look at trying to contrast that when last year you had \$25 million in so-called reinvestment that came out of the base funding, the same money for hospitals, Minister, tell us today that you'll stop deceiving



the public, that the \$435 million that has been hacked and slashed from front-line services — it's coming out next year — tell us what is your precise allocation —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. Minister of Health?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** I would like to know where the deception is in terms of this government announcing over the past year since it's been in office an investment of \$25 million in dialysis; an investment of some \$18 million in cardiac care; an investment in restructuring of over \$100 million today and many, many more dollars coming; an investment in cancer care of some \$42 million; an investment in the Trillium drug program; an investment in long-term care in our communities in the province of Ontario of \$170 million. And on and on it goes in addition to the announcements I made last Friday in Mississauga, in Shelburne and in Owen Sound.

These investments total over \$600 million in health care by this government. This government has put health care as its number one priority.

**Mr Kennedy:** The only number one priority for this government is to privatize health care, is to bring in a two-tier system. There has been almost a billion dollars cut, and there's another 7% going to be cut next year, over \$500 million. This government is introducing a system of chaos.

The Ontario Hospital Association, which heretofore has supported some of the restructuring, has said what you're doing makes no sense. It makes no sense, these random announcements that have no connection to any kind of plan. It makes no sense to Eva either. Eva is a 92-year-old woman who spent seven days, courtesy of your cutbacks, in the Queensway emergency department waiting for a bed. We want to hear what you're going to say to Windsor, where they've found out that anomalies there mean they're getting 18% less funding per capita than anywhere else in the province, showing again that you don't have a plan. There is no way that people can believe you're looking after the interests of the people in Lincoln, the people in Grimsby, the people who have to face hospital closures because of these arbitrary cutbacks you're doing.

Will you do one simple thing? Will you hold back on your cuts to hospitals until at least your restructuring commission starts to make public plans for the entire province? What you're creating is an unholy mess right now and —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon David Johnson:** In an era where, as we all know, the federal Liberal government has cut back \$2 billion in health care and social care to the province of Ontario, this government has a vision to put the patient first in the province. I might say that in terms of addressing our health care needs, Ontario is a little bit behind. In Winnipeg, for example, they've had a number of bed closures, yet there's increased access to surgery and more patients receiving care. We intend to have better services in Ontario and more people receiving care in the province of Ontario.

The member opposite indicates that I was in Shelburne. In Shelburne, two hospitals have got together and they now have one administration. Formerly they had two administrations and the money went to pay each administration. Now they have saved money. Hospitals across the province are looking at areas in which to save money which will not affect the patient. I endorse this, and now we are reinvesting the money back to what —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. New question; the member for Algoma.

#### EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a question to the Minister of Education and Training, who this morning had only his second meeting with the president of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation in two years. Mr Manners, the president of OSSTF, asked a question of the minister, very straightforward: Will your government fund all necessary classroom expenditures and how much will you guarantee to invest in Ontario classrooms? It's a question that has been raised in this House a number of times.

The minister has an agenda, and that is to cut money going to Ontario classrooms as he amalgamates school boards. The KPMG study commissioned by the government to review cost savings said that the ministry is assuming that the costs of amalgamated boards will be managed without additional funding. So let me put Mr Manners's question in another way: Is it your government's intention that the new expenditure formula you are going to introduce for school boards will result in an overall reduction —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The member for Algoma, thank you. Minister?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I want to thank the member for Algoma for the question. Yes, in fact I did have a chance to meet with Mr Manners this morning. Somewhat to my surprise he arrived this morning, but I was able to take some time off from a meeting I was engaged in at the time to have a discussion with him. We have a regularly scheduled meeting tomorrow afternoon to discuss some very important issues, because I think it is important that those of us in the education community, with the OSSTF and other organizations, talk about some of the critical issues before us, including finding a way to have better methods of resolving bargaining issues than the method we had to use here on Thursday. We have a regularly scheduled meeting, and I'll be pleased to attend that meeting.

I asked Mr Manners this morning if we could engage in a dialogue, if we could talk about some of the critical issues before education as we move to fulfil our agenda, and that is to have an equal opportunity for a high-quality education for every student in the province and to lift student achievement from the level of mediocrity it's at now to something that's higher than the average in Canada.

1440

Specifically to the question, we have made a commitment, and we intend to be held to account for that, that we will provide the funding for —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.



**Mr Wildman:** In the KPMG review it says that the government will be able to take \$10 million out of classroom supplies and equipment. That should be great comfort to parents like Diana McGill of Cobourg. Her son is in grade 8, where there is a table used by a number of students because there aren't enough desks. She also says there aren't enough textbooks in the classroom, so the students have to share the books and they can't take them home.

KPMG also suggested you could cut \$1.3 million from instruction supports, that is, the people who provide teachers' aides for students with special needs. The Northumberland and Clarington Board of Education has increased the teacher-pupil ratio for education assistance from 1 to 20 to 1 to 27.

Minister, you keep saying you want to take Ontario's students to the head of the class. Exactly how do you intend to get them there when you're cutting the ground out from beneath them?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** Yes, the consultant's report on our changes to the governance structure indicated that we can expect a saving of about \$150 million from a reduced bureaucracy, money that will be available either to spend in the classroom or return to the taxpayers, as the case may be.

In direct answer to your question, yes, there were some small amounts identified in terms of collaboratively purchasing supplies for the classroom; some savings that might happen because we have coterminous boards under our new model. But the bulk of the savings identified by the consultant was from reducing the number of politicians in our education system from 1,900 to 700. Once again, that was the bulk of the savings. Those costs can now be directed to the classroom, can now be directed to achieving better results by each individual student across the province. That is the agenda of this government, that is what we're doing and that is why we are changing our system of education.

#### HIGHWAY FINANCING

**Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South):** My question is to the Minister of Transportation concerning a national highway system.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The member for Niagara South can ask any minister he likes. I appreciate the fact you want to give him direction and I'm surprised he doesn't take it too, but I will let him ask the minister.

**Mr Hudak:** As the minister is well aware, an efficient and well-maintained national highway system is very important for the economic wellbeing of this province as well as the rest of the nation. Not too long ago I brought forth a private member's resolution, with the support of this House, to ask the government for a fair commitment to a national highway program.

We heard here today how on a typical day in this province vehicles travel 200 million kilometres on Ontario's highways, and that's equivalent to about 5,000 trips around the world. In Niagara that means the QEW, the 400 series highways and indeed Highway 3 through Port Colborne are in need of some work.

Can the minister tell the House what initiatives his ministry has taken to ensure a fair share of any federal funding for highways, including a national highways policy?

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I'd like to thank the member for Niagara South for the question and also for his ongoing support of this issue. It has been greatly appreciated.

On October 7, 1996, the member for Niagara South and I appeared before the House of Commons standing committee on transportation, where my submission recommended that the federal government should establish a national highway investment program to support a national highway system, which is very critical for further growth of Canada's trade and tourism.

I strongly urged the federal government that Ontario should receive a fair share of such a program. Since our major highways are among the most heavily used for trade and tourism, our motorists contribute over \$2 billion a year to the federal coffers. For some reason the federal government refuses to give us one dollar — your pals.

**Mr Hudak:** I know that the minister has campaigned very strongly for a federal share of the national highway program. I've been at his side on many occasions. The United States has an excellent national highway program. Mexico, I think, is investing \$7 billion or \$8 billion in its own national highway program.

Ontario needs the federal government to finally recognize the long-term economic benefits of a national highways policy. Minister, can you inform the House today of any federal reaction to our appearance before the standing committee in October?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** I'm pleased to inform the House, and I think the members of the opposition would like to hear, that at least we are making some headway. We have received a discussion paper from the standing committee as of December 17, 1996. The paper is entitled "The Renewal of the National Highway System" and clearly indicates a need for federal funding. The discussion paper also outlines a number of possible considerations for funding our national highway system.

Furthermore, a round table discussion for stakeholders has taken place in Ottawa and we are going to know what kind of role public-private partnerships can undertake in funding highway infrastructure of national importance. The results of that discussion will be shared with ministry staff and I look forward to sharing it with this House.

#### EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, you're rather given these days to using fine words about fair funding for every student, but I guess I'm having a little bit of difficulty understanding what is fair about funding that deprives students of access to junior kindergarten in some 25 boards across the province; and I'm having some difficulty seeing what's fair about funding that leaves 40 students in a classroom or forces teachers to give students textbooks that are held together by elastics or leaves three kids to a seat in a school bus; and I certainly don't see



what's fair about funding that takes away the support that special education kids need to be able to learn.

Those are just some of the realities that have been forced on our classrooms because of the cuts you made to education last year. Do you agree that fair funding starts with a commitment to stop any further cuts?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I thank the member opposite for the question. Let me be very clear about this. Class sizes that are negotiated in collective agreements that increase class size; special education reductions of any kind, particularly when there have not been any special education grant reductions in this province; junior kindergarten programs which the province funds the same way it funds other school board programs: Some of these local decisions that have been made over the course of the last year, some of them made in response to the social contract, are the very reason this government has moved decisively to change our governance structure for education and to make sure our funding formula is fair for each and every student.

That's why this government has taken the responsibility for funding education off the property taxes and taken that burden on as a provincial government. We believe we must quantify the costs of a high-quality education and meet that cost in every individual circumstance right across the province.

**Mrs McLeod:** What concerns everybody who cares about education, about what happens to kids in a classroom, is that the only reason this government has taken education off the property tax is to get control of education funding so it can find big money to pay for the tax cut. That's what's worrying everybody. We know we have a Minister of Education who has repeatedly said that he thinks we already spend too much on education, who's repeatedly denied what the impact is on kids in classrooms of the cuts that have already been made.

We know you want to help out the Premier and the Minister of Finance by finding another \$1 billion to help pay for that tax cut, but surely now that you are going to take responsibility for all the program cuts that have to be made, you will understand that funding isn't fair for any student if it's going to mean larger classes and fewer resources and less support for kids.

Minister, if you really believe in fair funding for students, will you say loudly and clearly that there will be no further cuts? Will you make a commitment today that the spending, the funding for education will remain at least at the level it is today?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** Let's clarify this for the member opposite, and perhaps once and for all the member opposite can get the message on this file. First of all, we are very interested in having funds that impact the quality of education for children. We believe that \$150 million less spent on bureaucracy and trustees might help that.

Also, a note about your earlier statement about who cares about the classroom, about kids in the classroom: We have a system of education in Ontario right now that was left to us by your government and by the previous government where the students of Ontario — I think the member should listen to this — are achieving at less than the average rate in terms of their scholastic abilities of

other students in other provinces who have already taken on these changes.

That's why this government is moving, and moving quickly, to make the changes so that we can improve student achievement, so we can have meaningful standards in the classroom. My only regret is that your government hadn't moved to make education better for the kids in the classroom some years ago so we wouldn't be behind the other provinces, so we in fact could be ahead of them.

1450

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** My question is for the Minister of Environment and Energy. On Friday I attended a news conference with environmentalists as well as city councillor Peter Tabuns and Metro councillor Jack Layton. They believe your government is breaking the law because the megacity bill has not been placed on the environmental registry under the Environmental Bill of Rights. Even worse, there will be no environmental assessment of the impact there will be on our natural and social environment as this government rams its megacity legislation through in a matter of weeks.

There is real concern that a lot of the innovative municipal environmental programs will go down the tubes. Why aren't you speaking up on this issue? Can't you at least enforce the law and try to prevent your government's mega-destruction of our environment?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** There are several issues involved in the question and I want to thank the member for the opportunity to clarify them.

The environmental assessment process relates to undertakings. It does not relate to legislation which is in front of this Legislature. I think it would be highly unusual for us as legislators to say that some other group had a greater power than the members who are elected to this body to decide on whether a law should be passed or not be passed.

The second issue relates to the environmental registry. With regard to that particular legislation, it is the choice of each minister as to whether they put their particular piece of legislation on that registry or they do not. The decision by the minister is related to what is the content of that bill. Bills which are primarily administrative or which deal with tax matters or financial matters are not normally put on the particular registry. I would characterize this bill as being that. Notwithstanding that, this would be a choice of the Minister of Housing.

**Ms Churley:** Minister, the Environmental Commissioner has already slapped the wrists of your government at least twice now. I don't know if she said you'd actually broken the law, but even the auditor has complained that too many things are being done behind closed doors in secret. You've already been warned about this, and here you go again perhaps breaking the law. At the very least, this should have been posted on the registry.

Once again you are not standing up for the environment. You are not paying any attention to the massive negative impacts that this massive megacity bill could



have on the environment. Your ministry has cut over 750 jobs, has laid off a third or more of the staff, with we believe more to come. Why won't you at least, instead of standing up and defending your Premier and the other ministers again today, stand up for the environment and say that you insist on this going on the registry and that some kind of environmental assessment happen? Because it will affect the environment.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** It's nice to stand here and grandstand about standing up for the environment and that you're a great protector of the environment, but I must follow the laws of the country and, as they are written, the laws of this particular province. The law relating to the environmental registry requires ministers to follow that law in spirit with that law.

I have consulted with my legal representatives and legal counsel in my particular ministry, and they said it would be quite wrong to put this particular piece of legislation on the environmental registry. But as I said, this was a choice of the Minister of Housing and I'll refer the question to him to allow him to make his particular defence.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** You can't answer a question and then refer it. You either answer it or refer it; you can't do both. New question.

#### HIGHWAY SAFETY

**Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** My question is for the Solicitor General.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** How are your hospitals in Cambridge doing?

**Mr Martiniuk:** Very nicely, thank you.

As you know, I represent the people of Cambridge. Great numbers of our residents commute at least 100 kilometres every day using the 401. I want to ask the minister if he's aware of the latest CRASH survey which asked 2,000 actual commuters in my area what they thought was the best way to make highways safer.

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I just happen to have a copy in my hand. This is Commuters to Reduce Accidents for Safer Highways, a 1996 question-and-answer survey of 1,869 Highway 401 commuters in the Cambridge OPP detachment area. This was put together with the good work of the folks in the community in that area and the OPP.

The survey found that 89% of the commuters questioned indicated that photo-radar did not improve the safety of their commute. They had two suggestions on ways to increase safety on our highways: Number one was to increase police visibility on the highways and number two was to target aggressive drivers, two policies which this government is actively pursuing.

**Mr Martiniuk:** I'm pleased to hear the government is listening to the concerns and suggestions of commuters about ways of improving safety.

I'd like to ask the Solicitor General what actions are being taken to increase police visibility and target aggressive driving.

**Hon Mr Runciman:** As an observer of this government would know, road safety is a top priority, and we've undertaken a number of initiatives with respect to

highway safety in the Ministry of the Solicitor General, the Attorney General and the Minister of Transportation.

The OPP has established eight Highway Ranger units throughout the province, 116 full-time Rangers whose job effectively is to target aggressive drivers. In the very near future we will be starting up another Highway Ranger unit in the northeastern region of the province.

We announced a number of months ago the All Hands on Deck initiative, where we have experienced OPP officers, regardless of rank, out on the highways in the greater Toronto region during peak traffic hours, thereby increasing visibility of police cruisers on our highways.

The proof is in the pudding: There were 13% fewer highway traffic deaths in the first half of 1996. Clearly it is working and we're confident it will continue to do so.

#### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I'd like to announce, if the members would recognize in the members' gallery is a gentleman who was first elected to this House in a 1948 by-election, Mr Al Johnston, who represented Parry Sound for 24 years. Welcome.

#### COMMENTS OF MINISTER OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. It has to do with the report of the Honourable Gregory Evans, the Integrity Commissioner, dated today.

The commissioner investigated the comments the minister made and said that in investigating the comments, he was drawn to what he calls the fourth principle in the preamble to the act that states, "Members are expected to act with integrity and impartiality that will bear the closest public scrutiny."

The Integrity Commissioner then went on to review the remarks that you made and has analysed them relative to that preamble, "Members are expected to act with integrity and impartiality that will bear the closest public scrutiny."

The commissioner then goes on to say about the comments you made, Minister, "In my opinion, such comments were inappropriate, and do not reflect a proper appreciation of the preamble," in other words, that you did not act with integrity and impartiality that will bear the closest public scrutiny.

Are you prepared today to apologize and to admit that you made a mistake?

1500

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I happen to have a copy of the commissioner's findings here and I'd like to read it into the record:

"Finding:

"On the evidence before me, I am satisfied that the Honourable Allan Leach, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, did not violate section 4 of the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, either personally or as a result of the activities of his executive assistant, John Matheson, for which he accepted responsibility."

I think that answers the question.



**Mr Phillips:** That actually doesn't answer the question at all, Minister. It is clear that the Integrity Commissioner looked at the comments you made. He deliberately reviewed the preamble, "Members are expected to act with integrity and impartiality that will bear the closest scrutiny"; he reviewed the remarks that you made about your organization phoning a law firm and complaining about a case that they were proceeding with against the government; and he said, "Any such communication, while it may seem innocuous to the minister, may be viewed otherwise by the recipient of the inquiry." This is an extremely important charge he makes against you, a bully charge.

The Integrity Commissioner says, "In my opinion, such comments were inappropriate and do not reflect a proper appreciation of the preamble." He is saying directly to you that you did not act with integrity and impartiality that will bear the closest public scrutiny. I give you another chance today. Are you prepared today now to apologize and admit you were wrong and the Integrity Commissioner was right?

**Hon Mr Leach:** Obviously the member opposite didn't hear me when I read him the findings of the report, the conclusions. That means the end. This is what he rules. Perhaps you might understand that. The findings are:

"On the evidence before me, I am satisfied that the Honourable Allan Leach, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, did not" — that's n-o-t — "violate section 4 of the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, either personally or as a result of the activities of his executive assistant...for which he accepted responsibility."

I don't know what could be more clear than that. I just can't understand where that member is coming from. Read the conclusion.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** New question.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I have a question to the same minister on the same issue. I have the report in front of me as well and I would say to the minister that his arrogance seems to know no bounds. If you had read all of the text before you — the commissioner works under certain guidelines. At the end of the day, he said that you did not contravene the Members' Integrity Act. What he does say is that certain comments of yours were inappropriate. He goes on to say in another place that certain actions prevented the parents in my riding from getting the information they wanted.

This is a very serious comment from the commissioner. You have been given the opportunity today to apologize. I would ask you again to do so. I am sure that the members of my community who were involved in this would like to hear that apology from you.

**Hon Mr Leach:** Maybe that member was too far away to have heard my response, but to pick bits and pieces out of a report, to me, is totally inappropriate. What the commissioner, the Honourable Gregory Evans, clearly states in his findings is, "On the evidence before me, I am satisfied that" there was no breach. I'm prepared to put it in again; I'll put it in again when the supplement comes.

**Ms Churley:** Let me read something into the record here from the same report:

"The reasonable inference to be drawn from the above comments is that is not inappropriate for a minister of the crown or his political staff to communicate with the law firm which is in the process of litigating with his ministry, to ascertain whether that law firm is 'serious' about proceeding with the litigation. Any such communication, while it may seem innocuous to the minister, may be viewed otherwise by the recipient of the inquiry."

"In my opinion, such comments were inappropriate and do not reflect a proper appreciation of the preamble."

That is pretty clear. I ask you again, could you apologize to my constituent?

**Hon Mr Leach:** Again in response, just to make sure that it's there in response to every one of these questions, I am going to repeat the findings of the commissioner, the Honourable Gregory T. Evans, dated at the city of Toronto in the province of Ontario on this third day of February, 1997:

"Finding: On the evidence before me I am satisfied that the Honourable Allan Leach, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, did not violate section 4 of the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, either personally or as a result of the activities of his executive assistant, John Matheson, for which he accepted responsibility."

## MOTIONS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, Government House Leader):** I move that Mr Guzzo and Mr Bartolucci exchange places in the order of precedence for private members' public business and that the House will commence at 11 am on Thursday, February 6, to discuss ballot item 61 only.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

## PETITIONS

### NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North



York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I have affixed my signature.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** We'll just wait for a minute. There's too much noise.

#### WORKFARE

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** I have a petition here from a number of people from the city of Timmins or Porcupine that reads as follows:

"Whereas the Harris government has introduced the workfare program; and

"Whereas the unemployment rate in the province of Ontario increased by 57,000 in the month of September, giving a clear indication that there is a need for job creation; and

"Whereas the majority of welfare recipients do want to work and there is no evidence that workfare will create permanent jobs; and

"Whereas we believe workfare will eliminate permanent jobs;

"Therefore, be it resolved that the government of Ontario abandon its workfare program and concentrate on job creation."

I affix my name to that petition.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Mike Harris and the Progressive Conservative Party committed in the Common Sense Revolution to fully protect health care spending; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris Conservatives have managed to fully protect health care spending, even as the federal Liberal government has slashed health and social transfer payments to Ontario by \$2.1 billion; and

"Whereas notwithstanding the reduction of health care by the federal Liberal government, the Ontario Conservative government has pledged not to let annual health care spending fall below the \$17.4-billion level it was when they took office; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government of Ontario has added another \$300 million to the health care budget, increasing it to \$17.7 billion;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Parliament of Ontario to demand the federal Liberal government fulfil its responsibility under the Canada Health Act to the patients and taxpayers of Ontario by adequately funding health care."

I support this petition and I have so signed it.

1510

#### FIRE SAFETY

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This petition is in response to Bill 84. It's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the firefighters of Sudbury and Ontario are very concerned about Bill 84;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 is unfair;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 is discriminatory;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 endangers the wellbeing of the people of Ontario;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 requires extensive changes;

"Whereas we feel Bill 84 needs broad provincial public hearings before implementation; and

"Whereas we are concerned and we don't want to be burned by Bill 84;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand the Solicitor General to rewrite Bill 84 before being enacted into law only after extensive public hearings across Ontario."

Of course I affix my name to it as I agree with it.

#### WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Mike Harris government is attacking workers' compensation benefits and the rights of injured workers;

"Whereas Tory plans include taking \$15 billion from injured workers and giving \$6 billion to employers, including the government's rich corporate friends;

"Whereas Cam Jackson, the former Minister without Portfolio with responsibility for gutting the WCB, refused to hold public hearings, choosing to meet secretly with business and insurance industry representatives instead;

"Whereas the WCB has about \$7.6 billion in assets and its unfunded liability has been steadily shrinking;

"Whereas the Jackson report and WCB legislation are just part of a coordinated attack on occupational health and safety protections for working families in Ontario;

"Whereas Tory plans also include abolition of the internationally respected Occupational Disease Panel;

"Whereas the government needs to hear the message that taking money from injured workers and lowering incentives for employers to make workplaces safer is not the way to make Ontario a better place to live;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to hold full, province-wide public hearings on WCB reform; to listen to the voice of the people calling for improved occupational health and safety protection; and to tell the Tory government to call off its attack on the dignity and standard of living of injured workers and their families."

This is signed by residents in the riding of Sudbury East. I agree with them and I have affixed my signature to it as well.

#### CHOICE IN HEALTH CARE

**Mr John L. Parker (York East):** I have a petition here from Ms Pat Norton of 192 Sutherland Drive addressed to the Ontario Legislature and it reads as follows:

"I request as a taxpayer and consumer that I be confirmed in the right to make and act upon my own choices with respect to medical and health therapies offered by all regulated health care professionals, particularly physicians, as long as I am not being harmed or at risk of appreciable harm.



"I request that the Legislature enact a choice in health care act to ensure that consumers and taxpayers will have meaningful choices and access to safe, effective and cost-effective health care that meets their needs and that this legislation be modelled upon acts of this type already in place in such jurisdictions as the province of Alberta and the states of Alaska, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon and Washington. In particular, this act should establish the authority of true peer review and the standard of patient outcome.

"I further request that the government of Ontario take immediate action to terminate the pattern of abusive actions of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario which, contrary to their mandate and the public interest, attack and punish doctors simply because they employ complementary medical therapies. This the college does to the detriment of medicine, the welfare of patients, the rights of consumers, the interests of taxpayers and my personal needs."

#### OAKS DETOXIFICATION SERVICES

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I have a very short but important petition to place before the Legislature of Ontario which reads:

"We, the citizens of Elliott Lake and the North Shore, are gravely concerned about the recommendation that the Oaks detox service may close. Please reconsider your decision and allow this vital service to continue."

This is signed by over 500 of my constituents. I have affixed my signature and I too hope the government will reconsider this.

#### WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** I have a petition which reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Mike Harris government is attacking workers' compensation benefits and the rights of injured workers;

"Whereas Tory plans include taking \$15 billion from injured workers and giving \$6 billion to employers, including the government's rich corporate friends; and

"Whereas Cam Jackson, the former Minister without Portfolio with responsibility for gutting the WCB, refused to hold public hearings, choosing to meet secretly with business and insurance industry representatives; and

"Whereas the WCB has about \$7.6 billion in assets and its unfunded liability has been steadily shrinking; and

"Whereas the Jackson report and WCB legislation are just part of a coordinated attack on occupational health and safety protections for working families in Ontario; and"

*Interjection.*

**Mr Laughren:** Mr Speaker, I notice Mr Jackson is in the House and heckling as I'm trying to read this petition. I don't know why he would be. Everything in here is true.

"Whereas Tory plans also include abolition of the internationally respected Occupational Disease Panel"; — let him deny that if he will — "and

"Whereas the government needs to hear the message that taking money from injured workers and lowering incentives for employers to make workplaces safer is not the way to make Ontario a better place to live"; — and Cam Jackson should know that —

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to hold full, province-wide public hearings on WCB reform; to listen to the voice of the people calling for improved occupational health and safety protection; and to tell the Tory government to call off its attack dogs on the dignity and standard of living of injured workers and their families."

I support this petition and I have signed my name to it. I hope the message will get through to Mr Cam Jackson.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Petitions are not debates.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr John L. Parker (York East):** I have a petition here with a number of signatures on it, including that of Mr Les Anthony, otherwise known as Mr East York. It reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, residents of East York, are in favour of the borough of East York remaining as a separate municipality."

#### BEAR HUNTING

**Mr Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa East):** I have a petition addressed to the Parliament of Ontario.

"Whereas bears are hunted in the spring after they have come out of hibernation; and

"Whereas about 30% of the bears killed in the spring are female, some with cubs; and

"Whereas over 70% of the orphaned cubs do not survive the first year; and

"Whereas 95.3% of bears killed by non-resident hunters and 54% killed by resident hunters are killed over bait; and

"Whereas Ontario still allows the limited use of dogs in bear hunting; and

"Whereas bears are the only large mammals hunted in the spring; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals that are hunted over bait; and

"Whereas there are only six states in the United States which still allow a spring hunt;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to amend the Game and Fish Act to prohibit the hunting of bears in the spring and to prohibit the use of baiting and dogs in all bear hunting activities."

This petition has been signed by 498 Ontarians and I have affixed my name.

#### HOTEL DIEU HOSPITAL

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have a petition signed by a number of residents of Niagara that reads as follows:

"To the government of Ontario:

"Since the Hotel Dieu Hospital has played and continues to play a vital role in the delivery of health care services in St Catharines and the Niagara region; and



"Since Hotel Dieu has modified its role over the years as part of a rationalization of medical services in St Catharines and has assumed the position of a regional health care facility in such areas as kidney dialysis and oncology; and

"Since the Niagara region is experiencing underfunding in the health care field and requires more medical services and not fewer services; and

"Since Niagara residents are required at present to travel outside of the Niagara region to receive many specialized services that could be provided in city hospitals and thereby not require local patients to make difficult and inconvenient trips down our highways to other centres; and

"Since the Niagara hospital restructuring committee used a Toronto consulting firm to develop its recommendations and was forced to take into account a cut of \$44 million in funding for Niagara hospitals when carrying out its study; and

"Since the population of the Niagara region is older than that in most areas of the province and more elderly people tend to require more hospital services;

"We, the undersigned, request that the government of Ontario keep the election commitment of Premier Mike Harris not to close hospitals in our province, and we call upon the Premier to reject any recommendation to close Hotel Dieu Hospital in St Catharines."

I affix my signature to this petition as I'm in full agreement with its contents.

1520

#### ONTARIO CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTE

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** I have a petition to the Legislature and to the Honourable Robert Runciman.

"We, the undersigned, believe that helping reduce crime and abuse in our communities is our responsibility as employees of the Ministry of Correctional Services, as professionals in related fields and as concerned citizens;

"Closing institutions which provide specialized services to women and treatment to men does not achieve that goal;

"Physical, emotional and sexual abuse is often transmitted from one generation to the next, with tremendous costs;

"Treatment aimed at breaking that cycle must include the abuser so that another generation of children is not raised with the same destructive lessons;

"As Mr Ross Virgo has stated, 'the Ontario Correctional Institute is a therapeutic community known around the world for their techniques';

"Research statistics support anecdotal evidence that we are effective in changing abusive behaviour;

"A therapeutic community cannot exist in a super-prison;

"Save victims and money by keeping what works open."

That's signed by a number of people who recognize the important service OCI provides; I support it.

#### RELEASE OF SEX OFFENDERS

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I have an important petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and to the Attorney General of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned, all residents of Ontario, do respectfully request that:

"(1) convicted sex offenders not be released on bail pending an appeal;

"(2) community members be notified prior to the release of a sex offender into the community; and

"(3) communities be given the opportunity to have input into the conditions of bail, probation or parole when a sex offender is being released into the community."

This is an important issue in Algoma-Manitoulin and it's signed by over 500 people.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### RED TAPE REDUCTION ACT (MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP, CULTURE AND RECREATION), 1997

##### LOI DE 1997 VISANT À RÉDUIRE LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES AU MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES CIVIQUES, DE LA CULTURE ET DES LOISIRS

Mrs Mushinski moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 114, An Act to reduce red tape by amending the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture Act and repealing the Parks Assistance Act / Projet de loi 114, Loi visant à réduire les formalités administratives en modifiant la Loi sur le ministère des Affaires civiques et culturelles et en abrogeant la Loi sur l'aide destinée à la création de parcs.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

##### RED TAPE REDUCTION ACT (MINISTRY OF FINANCE), 1997 LOI DE 1997 VISANT À RÉDUIRE LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES AU MINISTÈRE DES FINANCES

Mr Tsubouchi, on behalf of Mr Eves, moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 115, An Act to reduce red tape by amending or repealing certain statutes administered by the Ministry of Finance and by making complementary amendments to other statutes / Projet de loi 115, Loi visant à réduire les formalités administratives en modifiant ou en abrogeant certaines lois dont l'application relève du ministère des Finances et en apportant des modifications complémentaires à d'autres lois.



**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

RED TAPE REDUCTION ACT  
(MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE,  
FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS), 1997

LOI DE 1997 VISANT À RÉDUIRE  
LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES  
AU MINISTÈRE DE L'AGRICULTURE,  
DE L'ALIMENTATION  
ET DES AFFAIRES RURALES

Mr Tsubouchi, on behalf of Mr Villeneuve, moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 116, An Act to reduce red tape by amending or repealing certain statutes administered by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Projet de loi 116, Loi visant à réduire les formalités administratives en modifiant ou en abrogeant certaines lois dont l'application relève du ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

RED TAPE REDUCTION ACT  
(MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AND  
COMMERCIAL RELATIONS), 1997

LOI DE 1997 VISANT À RÉDUIRE  
LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES  
AU MINISTÈRE DE LA CONSOMMATION  
ET DU COMMERCE

Mr Tsubouchi moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 117, An Act to reduce red tape by amending certain statutes administered by the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations, by repealing the Costs of Distress Act and by making complementary amendments to the Mortgages Act / Projet de loi 117, Loi visant à réduire les formalités administratives en modifiant certaines lois dont l'application relève du ministère de la Consommation et du Commerce, en abrogeant la Loi sur les frais de saisie-gagerie et en apportant des modifications complémentaires à la Loi sur les hypothèques.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

RED TAPE REDUCTION ACT  
(MINISTRY OF HEALTH), 1997

LOI DE 1997 VISANT À RÉDUIRE  
LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES  
AU MINISTÈRE DE LA SANTÉ

Mr Tsubouchi, on behalf of Mr David Johnson, moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 118, An Act to reduce red tape by amending certain statutes administered by the Ministry of Health, by amending other statutes in relation to statutes administered by the Ministry of Health and by enacting the Ministry of Health Appeal and Review Boards Act, 1997 / Projet de loi 118, Loi visant à réduire les formalités administratives en modifiant certaines lois dont l'application relève du ministère de la Santé et d'autres lois relativement à celles dont l'application relève de ce même ministère et en édictant la Loi de 1997 sur les commissions d'appel et de révision du ministère de la Santé.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

RED TAPE REDUCTION ACT  
(MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES), 1997

LOI DE 1997 VISANT À RÉDUIRE  
LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES  
AU MINISTÈRE DES RICHESSES NATURELLES

Mr Tsubouchi, on behalf of Mr Hodgson, moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 119, An Act to reduce red tape by amending or repealing certain statutes administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources / Projet de loi 119, Loi visant à réduire les formalités administratives en modifiant ou en abrogeant certaines lois dont l'application relève du ministère des Richesses naturelles.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

RED TAPE REDUCTION ACT  
(MINISTRY OF NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT  
AND MINES), 1997

LOI DE 1997 VISANT À RÉDUIRE  
LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES  
AU MINISTÈRE DU DÉVELOPPEMENT  
DU NORD ET DES MINES

Mr Tsubouchi, on behalf of Mr Hodgson, moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 120, An Act to reduce red tape by amending the Mining Act / Projet de loi 120, Loi visant à réduire les formalités administratives au ministère du Développement du Nord et des Mines.



**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

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RED TAPE REDUCTION ACT  
(MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT  
AND ENERGY), 1997

LOI DE 1997 VISANT À RÉDUIRE  
LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES  
AU MINISTÈRE DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT  
ET DE L'ÉNERGIE

Mr Tsubouchi, on behalf of Mr Sterling, moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 121, An Act to reduce red tape by amending the Ontario Energy Board Act and repealing the Ontario Energy Corporation Act / Projet de loi 121, Loi visant à réduire les formalités administratives en modifiant la Loi sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario et en abrogeant la Loi sur la Société de l'énergie de l'Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

RED TAPE REDUCTION ACT  
(MINISTRY OF  
THE ATTORNEY GENERAL), 1997

LOI DE 1997 VISANT À RÉDUIRE  
LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES  
AU MINISTÈRE DU PROCUREUR GÉNÉRAL

Mr Tsubouchi, on behalf of Mr Harnick, moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 122, An Act to reduce red tape by amending certain statutes administered by or affecting the Ministry of the Attorney General or the Ministry of the Solicitor General and by making complementary amendments to other statutes / Projet de loi 122, Loi visant à réduire les formalités administratives en modifiant certaines lois dont l'application relève du ministère du Procureur général ou du ministère du Solliciteur général, ou qui le concerne, et en apportant des modifications complémentaires à d'autres lois.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Seniors Issues]):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In accordance with the standing orders, when the first bill was being presented for my colleague the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, you had asked for the vote and the member for Algoma indicated that the

bill should be renamed to eliminate the entire ministry. I wondered if that was a motion that would be in order and that you recognized it or not.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I was just pointing out that if the government were being honest about what it was doing, it would be renaming the bill "the elimination of the ministry."

**The Deputy Speaker:** If you've listened attentively, there was no motion made. It was just introduction of bills.

## OPPOSITION DAY

### PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** I move opposition day motion number 2:

Whereas the Harris government is dumping over \$6.4 billion in service costs to municipalities, including \$2.7 billion in social assistance, \$1.6 billion in public health and seniors long-term health care and \$270 million in child care services; and

Whereas the transfer of these services will add over \$1 billion in net new costs to property taxpayers; and

Whereas moving social services to the property tax base contradicts past municipal reform reviews including the 1991 Committee on the Provincial-Municipal Financial Relationship, the Ontario Fair Tax Commission, and the 1996 GTA task force report; and

Whereas Duncan Sinclair, the chair of the government's Health Services Restructuring Commission, said that dumping seniors' long-term health care on municipalities was "stupid" and "180 degrees out of phase with the (prevailing) philosophy"; and

Whereas the government's own Who Does What panel unanimously recommended against moving social services to the property tax base; and

Whereas the Metro board of trade and the GTA mayors oppose the government's plans to move social services to the property tax base because it will increase property taxes; and

Whereas the United Way and other service agencies say the government's reforms will reduce services or raise property taxes; and

Whereas the Canadian Taxpayers Federation has called the government scheme a "shell game" which will result in higher property taxes; and

Whereas David Crombie has said "The only way they (municipalities) can deal with any increasing (welfare) caseload or any long-term care is to either cut services or raise taxes. Which either means you're going to hit the poor or drive out business"; and

Whereas property taxes are considered one of the most regressive forms of taxation;

Therefore this House calls on the government to reconsider its decision to transfer over \$6.4 billion in service costs to municipalities and work on developing alternatives which: (1) do not add extra costs to municipalities; (2) follow the principles of disentanglement in moving hard service costs to municipalities and soft service costs to the province; and (3) which are devel-



oped in true consultation with municipalities and agencies to ensure that local property taxes do not increase as the result of provincial downloading.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Mr McGuinty has moved official opposition day number 2.

**Mr McGuinty:** I've been looking forward for some time now to be able to address in a substantive way in this House some of the concerns that have been raised through the mega-week announcements. Clearly mega-week in Ontario has come and gone and tremendous change is about to be made to the way Ontario works, unprecedented change. The question of course that people are now asking is, is this change for the better or is it change for the worse?

No one could deny that there is a tremendous appetite for change today in Ontario. That's one of the things that I quickly learned as a result of travelling the province together with some of my other leadership campaign colleagues. If there was one thing that people impressed upon us, it was that there is a tremendous desire for change.

If you're somewhat confused by the Harris changes found within the mega-week announcements, I can tell you that you are not alone. The flurry of announcements was deliberately designed to confuse. I have described the television advertising campaign as the military equivalent of saturation bombing. We are being bombarded on a regular basis with television advertising which is going to cost us, taxpayers in Ontario, between some \$2 million and \$3 million to tell us that all is well in Camelot and things are only going to get better.

You've got the combination of the flurry, the pace at which that change was introduced in this House and the television ads in addition to that, and it makes it very, very difficult to keep your eye on the ball. Each of the very complex announcements could have been made a few weeks apart, giving people a chance to study them, digest them and argue the pros and cons publicly before they were finalized. But instead, as in too many other cases, the Harris government went too far, too fast.

When someone puts up a smokescreen designed to confuse us, it's natural to ask, "What are they trying to hide?" In this case, while the smokescreen is complex, the consequences are very, very clear. I want to tell Ontarians that it's important to keep their eye on the following ball: We are going to see higher property taxes, we are going to have fewer services and we're going to have more user fees. Those are going to be the three fundamental consequences of the mega-week announcements, notwithstanding what the government would have us believe.

The government won't tell you what impact these changes are going to have on municipalities or on taxpayers. Either they won't release that information or, even worse, they don't know what's going to happen once their mega-dumping is complete. Speaker, you will know that I have on several occasions in this House asked the Premier and the Minister of Finance for them to release the secret studies that they have done which would detail in a comprehensive way the impact that the mega-week announcements are going to have on each of Ontario's communities.

The government has that information but it is continuing to refuse to provide us with that information. The only logical conclusion that we can draw from that is that that information does not support the government's case and in fact supports ours, which again is simply that we are going to have higher property taxes, fewer services and more user fees.

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In essence, what mega-week boiled down to is this: The province took over one area of funding — education — from municipalities. I might say that there has been a general consensus that that would be a good thing to do, but not, and I want to repeat this, but not at all costs. Taking education off the property taxes is a good thing because property taxes are a regressive system of taxation and there are people who are paying property taxes right now who cannot afford to do so for something like education.

The province took over education. On the face of it, it appeared to be good, but in return — this is very important to understand — it dumped a slew of new areas on the property taxpayers, including public health services, welfare, child care, long-term care for seniors, libraries, public housing, public transit and highways. Each of these new areas will now have to be paid for out of property taxes.

The Premier would have us believe that this is an even swap, but in reality, the province has taken over an area, education, that is easily predicted and quite readily controlled. In turn, it has dumped on to the property taxpayer areas that are either subject to wild swings, like welfare, or areas where there will be incredible growth down the road, such as long-term care for Ontario's seniors. It's sort of like Mike Harris saying: "Look, we're going to swap cars. You give me your 1997 model and I'll give you my 1982 model and we'll call it even." Guess who's going to have the higher maintenance costs.

Let's look at some of the key mega-announcements. It has long been argued that it would be more fair to pay for education out of the income tax system instead of through property taxes, as I just indicated. Unlike income tax, property tax is regressive because it doesn't take into account our ability to pay. Retired seniors on fixed incomes are often victims of a regressive property tax.

But Mike Harris is doing much more with education than just taking its cost off our property taxes. The Premier is taking control of education, and the elimination of so many school boards and trustees will make it easier to exercise his will as opposed to the will of school board trustees and parents.

Minister of Education John Snobelen claims he can take \$1 billion more out of education, and that is \$1 billion on top of the \$400 million he has already squeezed out of education. Meanwhile, a host of social services will now have to be paid for by the property taxpayer. One key area is welfare, and as we all know, welfare costs can rise dramatically during a recession when there are mass layoffs. In the last recession welfare costs soared by over \$1 billion.

Furthermore, we know that the single fastest-growing portion of our population is seniors. The question we've got to ask is, how will municipalities be able to pay for



more long-term care for seniors, whether at home or in seniors' residences? There is clearly no magic solution to this. Taxpayers are going to have to pay for it through higher property taxes, cuts to other services, more user fees or a combination of all three.

The Minister of Finance has been given to telling us that taxpayers are somehow going to receive a 10% cut in their property taxes as a result of these changes. But he can't back that up with any credible numbers and he doesn't seem to have a clue about how taxes are going to break down on a regional basis.

Since the Conservatives will not provide this information, we have launched a fact-finding mission to determine exactly what is going to happen when Mike Harris and Al Leach have finished wreaking havoc on taxpayers throughout this province. I can tell you that we have already had meetings in Toronto, Hamilton, Sudbury and Windsor. Let me tell you about just some of what we've been hearing.

In Toronto, Paul Pagnuelo of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation told us, "The government of Ontario is playing a shell game with taxpayers." That is a direct quote. The federation believes, as I do, that the mega-week announcements will result in increased business and residential taxes.

In Windsor, we heard from ambulance paramedics who are worried that dumping ambulance service on to municipalities could result in poor response times or privatization. I can tell you that when we heard from those ambulance attendants last Friday, one of the things that they were so proud of is that they had met those conditions which they were supposed to meet in order to obtain paramedic training.

There are paramedics in Hamilton, in Oshawa, in Toronto and in Ottawa, and they may very well be in other communities, but the concern that the ambulance attendants have today in Windsor is that the city of Windsor will not be able to afford to pay for their training as paramedics. What that means is that if you have a heart attack in Hamilton, Toronto, Oshawa or Ottawa, there is a better likelihood that you'd be able to get the necessary assistance on the ground, where you drop, in those centres than you would in Windsor. What we're talking about is two different levels of health care in Ontario communities, and clearly that is not acceptable.

Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Chair Terry Cooke told us that he thought putting welfare and other social services on to municipalities was unfair and that he didn't think that the Harris government fully appreciated what the regional impact of all those changes would be.

In Sudbury, regional officials expect increased costs of \$105 million. We heard about another study which said Sudburians should expect a \$1,600 tax increase per household. This from Mike the Taxfighter, the man who staked his claims on the fact that he was going to reduce taxes in Ontario. Yet we are quickly learning, as mega-week begins to shake out for us, that property taxpayers are going to experience dramatic tax hikes.

I'm convinced that Mike Harris and Al Leach have made a critical error in thinking that people will accept these changes on faith and not ask questions. As we've seen, people want to know if their property taxes are

going to go up and whether they're going to get the services they need where and when they need them. If the Tories can't answer these questions and back them up with solid facts, they had better return to the drawing board now and come up with a better solution fast before they do any more damage.

I know that this weekend the *Globe and Mail* had an editorial suggesting, as have many, many others now, that the Tories go back to the drawing board with respect to their mega-week proposals. They have been joined by the *Financial Post*, the Canadian Federation of Taxpayers and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. I also read during the course of the weekend that the Association of Municipalities of Ontario has expressed some very, very serious concerns about the impact of down-loading social services on to Ontario municipalities. It has taken some time, but we are delighted to receive that word from as eminently reliable a source as the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

Perhaps one of the most disturbing aspects about mega-week is that these announced changes are going to make Ontario less caring and compassionate. If you look at the way Ontario has developed over the past — since the 1930s, in effect — you will understand that we have over those years taken on a collective responsibility here in our province to care for those who are in need. In the 1930s there were a number of Ontario municipalities that went bankrupt because they simply could not care for their needy on a local basis.

Quite rightly, that sense of responsibility has been enlarged to the point now where we understand in Ontario that although Metropolitan Toronto has 20% of the population, roughly speaking, it has 40% of the welfare recipients and it has 40%, roughly, of public housing. But the people in Kenora, for instance, Cornwall, Ottawa, Kincardine and Windsor understand that. That's not Toronto's problem; that's our problem, that's our responsibility as a province, to provide that care for our needy no matter where they happen to reside. That has been a noble evolution in our province.

But now, by telling cities and towns that they must assume much greater responsibility for social services such as welfare, the province is letting the fox loose among the chickens. It is only natural to expect that property taxpayers, who shouldn't be paying for welfare for the very same good reasons that they shouldn't be paying for education, are going to apply pressure to their municipal politicians to keep their welfare costs down.

Pressure from municipalities across Ontario will easily lead to the province lowering any province-wide standards. Communities themselves could begin sending not-so-subtle signals to people down on their luck that it would be better if they just moved along, "You folks had best just move along because paying for you, paying for your needs, ensuring that you have some quality of life, is going to interfere with my quality of life as a property taxpayer."

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That's why over the years politicians at the provincial level in Ontario have quite rightly determined that that kind of responsibility for caring for our needy is a provincial responsibility and ought to be paid for by way



of a progressive income tax system where you provide assistance according to your ability to pay rather than off the property tax system. The property tax system, when it comes to paying for social services, is a recipe for disaster. We're going to be pitting people against people, and we have an obligation in this House to bring out people's better angels, to bring out their best, not reflect their worst.

I believe that Ontarians are a caring and compassionate people. I know that times are tough, but I can tell you that after travelling this province together with my colleagues during the past year, driving from community to community, I can say that Ontarians still care deeply about each other and our collective welfare. We understand in our heart of hearts that one way, one important way, to ready ourselves for the 21st century is to make sure that we always retain the capacity to look after our needy.

The mega-week announcements are going to limit our ability as a province to care for our needy, and that is unacceptable. Anything that tears away at our infrastructure of compassion, anything that pits Ontarians against each other, ought to be resisted with the greatest vigour, and that is exactly what we in the Liberal Party are doing.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak to the motion presented by the member for Ottawa South and am in full agreement with what is contained therein. What we have seen in the last couple of months is a whole series of dizzying announcements that have been pronounced by this government, and I have to tell you that it has bamboozled a whole lot of people, confounded many and divided many within society who would love to be able to respond to these individual components, these individual bills, because they are very, very concerned about what this government is doing.

But when it is presented all at once, they are completely divided, and I argue that is the intent of this government to bamboozle the Ontario population so they can't focus on any one specific bill, allowing the attack against this government to be weakened as a result. So let there be no mistake about the design of this government as it introduces bill after bill, forcing everybody to choose what particular issue they're going to fight against.

This government has chosen to be very undemocratic in Metropolitan Toronto and has everyone up in arms against the way this government has treated people in Metropolitan Toronto, and I, rightly, am on their side. They have decided that for their supporters in the region outside of Metro they would have democracy, that this government would even hire a facilitator to help the democratic process of deciding what type or if they would want to amalgamate.

But in Metropolitan Toronto all we have gotten is autocracy and omnipotence and arrogance from this government. They're telling us what is good for us. The order has come from the high levels of this government and essentially we simply have to accept it. That's how autocracy works in this province. That is how you begin to erode the democratic elements that most of us are used to. People are outraged that we are getting different

treatment here in Metro from those outside of Metro in the 905 and beyond, all over Ontario. That's the first point.

Disentanglement is the next point. This government has often argued that it's too confusing to have the various levels of government deal with various issues and so the government was going to make it easier. This government has not made it easier; in fact it has compounded and confounded the problem even more. It pretends that the costs for welfare, housing, long-term care, social assistance, public health, policing, water and sewage can all be passed on to the municipality because it is the appropriate level to be dealing with them.

When it's convenient to this government to pass something on to the municipality, it says, "Oh, this is an appropriate disentanglement." But what it has done is to offload essential costs on to the municipalities; it doesn't disentangle in a way that says, "We, the province, will take on welfare," as an example, "but we're all of a sudden going to share it." I don't see how that disentangles; it entangles municipalities even more. But this government shamelessly says that kind of disentanglement is all right because the government wants it to be this way. In fact they want to offload a whole lot of costs on to the municipalities so they don't have to deal with the costs. That's a problem.

They then say: "But, look, we've done something very important that people wanted. We've taken \$5.4 billion out of the property taxes, from which we raise, of course, money for education." A number of those fine people on the other side say: "This is great. Seniors will be happy." Seniors would have been happy had you taken that money out without offloading other essential services. You never told them before the election that you would do that.

AMO would have been very happy, as I am happy, to take the education portion out of property taxes. In fact, I've argued for this many a time. I think that's important. Of course, you then have to discuss what the appropriate level of funding is for the various regions that have different needs, but it's a separate discussion. You never said you were going to take this education property tax but impose something else on the property taxpayer. We never discussed that. AMO had no clue you would be doing that, but they would have been very happy had you taken the education portion out and paid those moneys out of an income tax system, which is fair. I agree with them. Terry Mundell is angry at this government.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** He should be.

**Mr Marchese:** Of course. But this is an association that's very supportive of Tories in general. When they do something as outrageous as this, they worry and they are angry and fighting back against a government that doesn't — well, it knows what it's doing — that is doing the wrong thing, against municipalities and the property taxpayer.

This government says that after they take the education portion out of property taxes people will be happy. It will be all right "because we're dumping other services on to municipalities and we'll be revenue-neutral." But if they're going to be revenue-neutral, why do it at all? A number of people are asking: "Why are you doing it? If



you want to achieve a revenue-neutral situation, why are you insane enough to be doing it?" Why would you be changing, deranging in fact, the whole system in order to arrive at a revenue-neutral position?

Reasonable people in Metro and outside Metro are beginning to understand that there is a design in all of this, that surely if you arrive at the same level of revenue-neutrality, why are you doing it? The design behind it is the following: They have got a problem. They have decided they wanted to give privileged people in this province a tax break. People nod in a very strange sort of way when they say, "Oh, but that's absurd." But it's not absurd. This is what you've done.

**Mr Bradley:** What does the bank president get?

**Mr Marchese:** Oh, those bank presidents, God, I can't but mention them all the time.

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North):** You are forgetting the clawback.

**Mr Marchese:** Sixty per cent of their privileged friends will get a big tax break. I'll state it more clearly so Mr Spina will understand it. Ten per cent of their privileged friends will get a total of 60% of that income tax cut. They're his friends, not mine. They're Mike Harris's friends, not mine: bank presidents, privileged individuals, friends of these fine people over here, banks that make big donations both to the Conservative and, I would add, the Liberal Party as well. I'm sorry to add that banks, which invest our money from our deposits and make fine contributions to the Tories and to the Liberals, are going to benefit greatly from this. A banker who earns \$1.7 million is going to get, by the end of all this, \$150,000. Can you believe that?

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I ask you from Sudbury, from Thunder Bay, from these other rural areas, all these other cities, Barrie and so on, how many people make \$150,000? Very few, except their privileged friends. That's what it's about. They're short. Every year they're short because of the insanity of the income tax cut, and because of that they need money. They have a lot of Tories smiling and laughing and saying, "No, that's not true," but it is true. They know it but they cannot, in public, say that is a fact. They will tell you: "Oh no, the member for Fort York isn't correct. The jobs are just rolling in like water from the mountain flowing every day, rolling in."

Jobs are not there. That income tax cut is hurting all of us. That is why this government shamelessly is going after essential services. That's why this so-called disentanglement is introduced. It is about taking education out of property taxes so they can take \$1 billion to \$2 billion out of the education system to give to their privileged friends, people like the bankers. That's what this is about.

I say it's a shameful act. It's shameful when they download things like housing. No other jurisdiction in the world has ever downloaded its responsibility to a municipality, no other jurisdiction in the world except these people, these Reform-minded Tories. I tell you there's no justification for that. Mike Harris, the Premier, and Leach and all the others can say, "We're doing this to help the municipalities out because they know how to deliver the service better." That's not what it's about. It is foolhardy and it's going to hurt our services. They know it, but the

people who seem not to know it are the ones who still continue to believe that these fine Reform-minded Conservatives are doing the right thing. There are still a lot of people in the 905 region and beyond who believe this government is doing the right thing.

Once housing is pushed down, we're going to see several things happening. Rent geared to income will increase, so a whole lot of people who are working poor, many who are now middle class, are going to be affected by that. That will happen and you will see some of these municipalities begin to sell off some of those projects, some of those units in the Metro housing authority. They will be selling them off. It will be a dog-eat-dog kind of thing, as it relates to housing. That's what this government is all about. They're shifting the responsibility on to individuals to survive. Communities no longer matter and they no longer have a role. This Tory government is pushing itself out. It is pushing its own responsibility out.

I almost say to them: "Why don't you quit, become a volunteer? Run for the next board of education, where the remuneration will be \$5,000, and do it voluntarily, which you're so proud of. Please leave this House, because you are abandoning your responsibility." Imagine offloading welfare on to the municipality taxpayer — an irresponsible act by a government that is completely wacko. It doesn't know what the hell it's doing. If you know what you're doing, it's worse. To pass on housing to the municipalities when no one in the world has done that is inexcusable. It is an insanity. To pass on welfare and child care and to pass on long-term care and to pass on public health is an insanity, a complete act of irresponsibility.

You can smile, Mr Clement, but people are going to come after you in your jurisdiction, and they will. At the moment the only thing you have got is that people are not yet fully informed. But I have to tell you, M. Clement and others, that people in Metropolitan Toronto — that's the jurisdiction I'm in — are fighting back. Bless this government, democracy is taking root in this province. We have to thank you for that. We thank you because we have seen people who have not been involved for years and realize the madness —

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. You don't have the floor. The member for Fort York has the floor.

**Mr Marchese:** They realize the madness of what is happening here, and people who hitherto have not been involved are now actively involved because they are afraid. These are the active ones. Soon you will see those who are not so active. You will see people starting to be involved because they're afraid, and not just because municipal taxes are going to go up. That's a given fact. That is a fact and I can guarantee that to anybody who's willing to call me to talk about that. We'll show you numbers. Property taxes are going to go up and services are going to go down. Downloading welfare to the property taxpayer, you will see a helter-skelter of services across Ontario. It is inevitable.

What the federal Liberal government has done is bad enough, to have stopped, literally, giving us the money around the Canada assistance plan and around post-secondary education and health and social services. What



they did was bad enough; what this government is doing is worse. What the federal Liberal government did in abandoning housing altogether and literally wanting to give it away to the provinces at a time that is the most complicated for us is almost acceptable, literally, to what this government is doing — not acceptable; I must say what the Liberals are doing is completely unacceptable to me, I find it objectionable, but compared to what this government is doing, my God, it pales in comparison.

Market value assessment is coming, folks. Market value assessment is coming in this province, and this government says, "It's about time a lot of people here in Metropolitan Toronto started paying their fair share." It's going to push out business and it's going to push out residents.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** The Liberals are listening. I'm sure they're closely attached to the monitors. They may not be here but they're listening. I'm convinced of it.

Market value assessment is coming in and it's going to mean increased property taxes to a whole lot of people. They don't know it yet. There are countless people in Metro in particular, but elsewhere across the province, who have purchased homes not realizing they are about to get a property tax increase just by the mere introduction of market value assessment.

Then entangle that with the increases in long-term care, where we'll see so many seniors coming into this province in the next 10 years, and they will need a lot of support in our communities. Hospitals are closing and this government is taking money away as opposed to putting money into the community to take care of these seniors, to take care of these vulnerable people who live in our communities. The money is not there and they're passing it on to the municipality and the taxpayer.

**Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation):** You broke the bank.

**Mr Marchese:** Ms Mushinski, it is a shameful act you and your government have been involved in, passing on services like public health and social assistance. One can barely get into it without having to be completely angry about this, and I tell you, I'm angry, because we're going to see property taxes increase in this province and I see that as an iniquitous act.

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Property taxes are regressive. They are not based on people's income and therefore they will create unequal consequences for many people. You have a lot of seniors who own homes, a lot of injured workers who are hanging on to their homes, a lot of middle class people who may have lost their salaries as a result of government firing a whole lot of people, including the federal government, letting them go. You have a lot of people who have invested a lot of money in their homes and you are about to make them vulnerable because property taxes will increase and services will go down.

The services we are proud of are under threat, in health, in housing — essential things — and in education where you are taking property tax dollars for education out to be able to cut \$1.2 billion or \$1.5 billion out of that system. It is a shameful act.

This motion we have before us moves in the right direction. I support it. I know my other colleagues will speak to this. We will support it. We hope the people watching will continue to write to the ministers in a letter, private and confidential, so ministers get it in their hands. We urge the public to meet with the Conservative members one to one, so they can see each other in the eye as each one talks to the other, and have them explain to you what will happen to the education system, what will happen to health and housing, what will happen to child care. Ask them to explain to you what is happening. Ask them to tell you why they are so certain their property taxes are not going to go up, where we argue and many argue that they're going to go up.

A banker, together with United Way, together with a board of trade individual, has stated clearly that this government is on the wrong track. They're not my friends by and large. They're your friends, most of them, and they're saying you're on the wrong track and that many people here in this province are going to be hurt as a result of your moves. David Crombie — he's a Conservative, your guy, your friend — has said to you, "You people are on the wrong track."

We hope that people are going to listen and that they will meet with you and will write you and will meet with us if they wish and call us to talk about how we defeat this government. Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Since this is the Liberal opposition day, I hope they would have an opportunity to participate, so I would ask if there is a quorum present.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Will you check if there is a quorum, please?

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is present, Speaker.

**Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I'm pleased to be able to be part of the debate on the motion before the Legislature. First, I'd like to clarify some misinformation outlined by the Leader of the Opposition in his motion.

The motion indicates, and I would like to say quite erroneously, that the government is dumping \$6.4 billion in costs on to municipalities. That statement simply isn't true. What we are doing is improving a flawed and multi-layered system of bureaucracy that Ontario residents have had to sift through for years, and try to find not only answers to their questions and queries but accountability. We've all heard the complaints about these exercises and we are trying to correct the situation.

Our government has been the first to aggressively and proactively put an end to the duplication and waste that occurs when services are provided in a muddled-up and confusing manner by various levels of government. Previous governments have looked at trying to untangle the web of bureaucracy, but simply lacked the vision to see the process through.

A prime example, one I'm sure most members of this Legislature are aware of, is someone trying to get social assistance. That individual or family may have to go to the municipal assistance office, the local provincial office, as well as meet with agency social workers in the course



of trying to get financial help and housing assistance. That is not only a complicated system; for those in need it is a frustrating way to seek help.

Through the Who Does What process the panel made recommendations on how to realign the different levels of government in a simpler, more accountable and less costly way. Once the panel made the recommendations, the government studied them, debated them, crunched the numbers and came forward with a plan of action to implement a new system which responds to the concerns of Ontario's residents about the cost and size of government. This plan sees the province taking on fiscal obligations for a number of new responsibilities and, in turn, transfers other responsibilities to municipalities.

One of the major changes to Ontario taxpayers is that we are removing education from the residential property tax bill, a move which will see a total of \$6.2 billion being moved off the backs of residential property owners by the year 2000. Taking education off the residential property tax bill is an issue that many governments have looked at in the past, yet none had the will to change the system to make it more equitable and fair for the citizens of the province.

The education portion of the residential property tax bill is a huge burden, one that we are taking off the backs of the residential property taxpayers and replacing with a fair, new funding model, a model which will treat all students equal, regardless of where they live.

Municipal politicians have demanded that the province move in this direction for some time now. Local politicians are also asking for a fairer way of funding education. We've heard in this House, and I have certainly heard from many of my constituents, that funding education based on local assessments is unacceptable as it has created an unfair and inequitable funding mechanism across this province.

It has been said many times in this Legislature that some boards of education spend up to \$2,000 more per student than many other boards in the province, and more specifically boards of education in my riding. Is it fair? Certainly not. Why should students, because of where they live, have more funding funnelled to their education?

I fully support a move to an equitable system of education funding. Children's quality of education should not be solely based on whether they live in an assessment-rich or an assessment-poor board. Ensuring all students have quality education is crucial to the future success of these children and the province as a whole.

Our children need to be able to cope in a changing world and as we enter a new millennium we will need many new and traditional skills to be able to compete in the global economy. Reforming the way education is funded is key to this, an equity municipalities have been demanding.

Finally a government has listened to the requests of local representatives.

In return for removing the upwardly spiralling cost of education, the government will give municipalities more responsibilities for some other services presently paid for by the province, including a larger share of social programs and welfare.

Municipalities are in a much better position than the province to deliver these services. Municipalities have shown that they can provide services effectively and in a way that is responsive to the needs of their communities. Yes, that does include more of the costs surrounding social assistance, public health care, long-term care and child care services, and yes, I believe that when we have finished this process we will have a better, easier to understand, streamlined, integrated social and community health service system which is more efficient and cost-effective and will be able to offer a better service to those seeking help.

I simply want to remind everyone of the reaction of municipalities when the previous government's discussion of disentanglement suggested that social assistance become a provincial responsibility. Despite what the Leader of the Opposition may choose to say, all municipalities certainly were not supportive of the province taking over the delivery of social assistance.

Municipal governments fully believe that they have a key role to play in the delivery of social assistance. They have closer contact with the local people and want to be involved in the delivery of this type of service for their residents. They have proven time and again that they can provide this service at a better cost to the taxpayer.

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I want to point out that while the municipalities have proven they can deliver these services at a better cost, neither the province nor the municipalities would be accountable to the taxpayer without sharing in the cost of the service. As for the province, it is difficult to be accountable for service which another level is totally delivering yet not contributing to financially. By moving to a 50-50 cost-sharing formula when it comes to welfare, not only will municipalities continue to deliver the service, but they will also be held accountable as they will be responsible for contributing half of the cost.

While giving the municipalities the ability to deliver these services, it's also important that the province set standards to ensure all residents are treated fairly.

Looking at the resolution, I find it inconceivable that the Leader of the Opposition implies that the province is adding \$1 billion in new costs to the property taxpayers. Certainly there will be tradeoffs. As education comes off the residential bill, other services will be added, but to simply throw out a figure of \$1 billion is not only wrong, it is irresponsible.

Movement of services to municipalities will allow local governments the ability to manage their responsibilities in a more efficient manner. Part of the decision to change the way we do business of the government is not simply to change who funds that service but to find better solutions to the problems that currently plague the system.

Through the new system the municipalities can manage, fund and coordinate local transportation services. They will have the ability to integrate fire, police and ambulance services to provide better services and save money through coordinated management efforts. These changes will give both the municipalities and the provincial government the ability to take a second look at how they do business and make the changes that need to be



made to provide not only stronger services, but services that are more effective.

If it were as simple as switching funding, as the Leader of the Opposition implies, without any changes in the roles and responsibilities that go along with that, then perhaps there wouldn't be savings to the taxpayer. That may be the vision the Leader of the Opposition holds; that isn't the way this government does business.

We believe that the overall changes will help lower taxes. We believe that both the municipalities and the province will save money through the realignment of responsibilities. Many municipalities have proven that, given the tools, they have the ability to find savings. In fact, many municipalities have shown that they are extremely good at finding a better way to deliver services.

For example, the town of Ajax will realize \$1.6 million in savings in 1996. They accomplished this with no tax increases, no cuts in services and no staff layoffs. In Ottawa-Carleton, an amalgamated police service will help the municipality save \$2.4 million a year. These are just some examples of the ways municipalities are looking for local savings and creative ways to manage their responsibilities.

While these municipalities are able to cut costs, we recognize that not all will be able to make the necessary changes immediately to deal with the changes. To ensure that all communities have the same opportunity to adapt to the change, a municipal social assistance reserve has been created as a safeguard against unforeseen local economic circumstances. The province will make an initial contribution of \$700 million for this municipal reserve.

As well, the \$800-million capital and operating restructuring fund will be available for the next four years as a capital fund for investment upgrades in infrastructure that municipalities will assume from the province. We are also setting up a permanent \$1-billion community reinvestment fund to ensure that special community needs are met. This replaces, and increases by 50%, the current municipal support grant.

We certainly have made provisions for those municipalities that will initially have difficulty adapting to change. We have put these funds in place to help ensure a smooth transition, to help train and build municipalities to achieve the best methods of handling their duties and responsibilities.

Not only are we helping municipalities make the necessary preparation for changes; we are also establishing a special team of provincial-municipal representatives to advise the government on implementation and management of the new alignment of responsibilities. This alignment will not only mean a better system for the people of Ontario; it will translate into a more responsible and effective division of government services.

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** I'm speaking in support of our leader's resolution today and I want to be very specific and focused in my remarks; I have just four and a half minutes for this debate.

We know that it is wrong to push social services down to the municipal taxpayer. We know that it is wrong to fund social services by property tax. We know that it is wrong. Not only has it never been recommended by anyone anywhere, but I can tell you that every respon-

sible and thoughtful policy person has told this government that it is making a mistake. They are making a mistake because the fundamental role of the provincial government is to do those things to look after those programs which distribute income: welfare, long-term care, ambulance services, social housing. Those things which are required in an equal and uniform way, those things which create a level playing field and those things which look after the most vulnerable in our society are rightly the responsibility of the provincial government. They should be funded from the progressive income tax.

As our leader pointed out, thoughtful public policy people, thoughtful public policy institutions, have also in the past recommended a shift from funding education on the property tax to more progressive income and sales taxes at the provincial level. All governments have looked at that, and all governments know that in order to shift education from the property tax, it would mean a huge increase in income or sales tax. It is only because of that enormous shift in costs that it has been rejected by governments.

David Crombie from the Who Does What panel looked very thoughtfully at this issue. He said it would be a good idea, if you could, to take education off the property tax, but when he got wind of the provincial government's idea to swap, as they suggest, and put social services on the property tax, David Crombie and the united, unanimous Who Does What panel said: "Don't do it. It would be a mistake. If it comes to a choice between the funding of education on the property tax and the funding of social services on the property tax, leave it as it is with education on the property tax." They argued, and I think rightly so, that education is more predictable and, if you wish, as a province, more controllable.

Social services respond to the ups and downs of economic activity. We know that there are economic cycles, and in a downturn, at a time when municipalities and municipal taxpayers are feeling most vulnerable, that is the time when property taxes will go through the roof as a result of increases in welfare caseload.

If there is an area where we need to see future expenditure, it is in the area of long-term care, and there are two very good reasons why funding long-term care on the municipal taxpayer is wrong. I would like to quote the Senior Citizens' Consumer Alliance, and this letter was signed on their behalf by Jane Leitch, the chair:

"We believe that this recent government decision" — she's referring to the funding of long-term care on the property tax base by property taxpayers — "will jeopardize consumers' rights to equitable, accessible health services; increase the burden on taxpayers; and severely impede the development of coordinated systems of health care in Ontario."

I agree with Jane Leitch and the very thoughtful Senior Citizens' Consumer Alliance, and they're not the only ones who are saying to this government, "Don't do it." Crombie and his panel are saying: "Don't do it. It's a mistake." Anne Golden, who wrote the Golden report, said: "Don't do it. It's a mistake." The United Way is saying: "Don't do it. It's a mistake." And 25 out of 28 mayors, leaders in the greater Toronto area, are saying: "Don't do it. It's a mistake."



This is not a Metropolitan Toronto or a GTA issue. I'm surprised at the member for Oxford, because he knows that it will have a very negative impact on local ratepayers and taxpayers in every municipality across this province as local municipal politicians — I see a former mayor of Sarnia is here as well, and he would know that municipal councils will have to choose between services for long-term care, social housing, public health and support for the most vulnerable and needy in our society, those on welfare and social assistance and children in need of child care. There are many municipalities that do not have the rich assessment bases required to be able to support these important social programs.

I'm going to sum up by quoting an editorial out of the Canadian Jewish News. They say: "The government's penchant for rushing through complex, controversial and far-reaching proposals is unseemly. Streamlining the government is indeed a worthy aim, but dismantling it is not, nor is disengaging from its social welfare service area, where it ought to remain firmly and permanently active."

In "From the Editor's Desk," I would like to read to this House a quote, the last paragraph: "It may be right for the provincial government to disentangle, but it is not right to disengage. Good government creates the conditions for economic progress, but economic progress is enhanced, not diminished, by humane, caring social welfare policies."

I implore the Harris government to reconsider this ill-thought-out and hastily-rushed-through social policy, which will have a devastating impact on the province of Ontario. It will hurt people; it will hurt property taxpayers. We will see, as a result of this policy, Ontario's quality of life suffer immeasurably.

1630

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Just a few days ago, as this stuff has been downloaded, indeed dumped on to municipalities across Ontario, I was talking to a neighbour of mine. She has been a small business person all her life, worked incredibly hard, raised three kids by herself, working 12-, 14-, 16-hour days, six and seven days a week, and finally managed to liquidate her assets in the business and buy a small house, a nice house, on Bald Street.

She just got whacked because Niagara region implemented market value assessment a year ago. She was one of the losers. She had bought this home understanding what the tax history was and bought it based on what her modest budget is.

When she learned from her government at the regional municipality of Niagara that what this government is doing to property taxpayers, across this province and in Welland and Thorold as well, is going to create a net loss for the regional municipality according to their finance director — and he's only just begun to do the calculations — and that the regional municipality of Niagara is looking for starters for at least a \$31-million property tax hike, this neighbour said to me, as we were out there surveying the unplowed street — because that's what municipalities are forced into doing now. Municipalities don't plow side streets, notwithstanding the hazard that creates — far beyond mere inconvenience. This government's downloading on to municipalities, this govern-

ment's clawback of transfer payments means the absence of things that a whole lot of folks were prepared to work hard to contribute to as a community, like snow-clearing of roads.

As we were out there surveying the accumulated snow and the drifts on Bald Street, this woman commented to me, "That's not common sense; it's stupidity." That's what she said to me, "It's not common sense; it's the farthest thing from it." But it's the most obvious, blatant stupidity she had encountered in her working lifetime here in Ontario.

I tell you, this woman knows about common sense. As a small business person in a difficult business, in a difficult economy, she knows full well what fiscal responsibility is. She knows, as do a whole lot of other people in Welland-Thorold, across Niagara region, that this government is playing its little Ponzi scheme here. People go to jail in this province and across Canada for the sort of pyramid schemes this government is developing now, and they serve considerable periods of time in jail. My God, why doesn't the Attorney General call the police and have it investigated? Perhaps even declare this government's guilt before any investigation or trial has taken place. Lord knows, he has done it in the past. The precedent has been set and he has done it unrepentantly, hasn't he, Speaker?

What's being done to property taxpayers by this government is nothing short of criminal. It's a Ponzi scheme — downloading of at least \$31 million in new property taxes on municipal taxpayers in the regional municipality of Niagara — and those who were losers in the market value assessment of last year are going to face another hit on top of the hits they took because of a very unforgiving market value assessment scheme.

I have some special fears. I'll tell you, I'm really afraid for the seniors in Niagara; for our parents and, for those of us who are still blessed with grandparents, for our grandparents. I go to buildings like 211 King Street, a non-profit seniors residence, designed with the cooperation and participation of seniors into smaller unit apartments, designed with a recreational room where seniors can gather, and the home to a whole lot of good, hardworking retirees, folks who have worked a lifetime and who have modest retirement incomes and who compete for apartments at 211 King Street.

You know what's going to happen to 211 King Street? It's no longer going to be the rent-geared-to-income building that it has been, because this government has abandoned social housing, it has abandoned non-profit housing, it has abandoned co-op housing, it has abandoned public housing, so that its rich developer friends can scoop these up and be the slumlords that this government's abandonment of rent control will permit those developers to be.

People like my parents and your parents, my neighbours' parents and grandparents, notwithstanding having worked a lifetime, and worked hard, and notwithstanding having made sacrifices, and making them willingly, to build the public institutions not for themselves as much as for their children and grandchildren, these very same folks are going to have imposed on them not just a downloading but a poverty that only those old enough to



remember the Great Depression will have any familiarity with.

This downloading is going to create some activity, I tell you. There's going to be a whole lot of activity in church basements as more and more church communities feel compelled or driven by the needs of their neighbourhoods to have soup kitchens. Go to a soup kitchen once in a while and see the folks who are there. Take a look at the disproportionate number of seniors, people who have worked their lifetimes, who thought they have paid their dues, and who did build and who did pay but have had it all taken away from them by this government. And the disproportionate number of kids. One out of three children in the city of Toronto is being supported on social assistance, and as this government drives its steamroller across the face of Ontario there'll be even more.

It's not just a big-city phenomenon. I don't come from Toronto. I come from, I believe, a part of Niagara that's more reflective of the vast majority of Ontario outside Toronto. Just as I'm worried about seniors housing like 211 King Street, I'm worried about — the last government in its Jobs Ontario program picked up its share of a new seniors home named Rapelje Lodge after one of our prides of Niagara, Doug Rapelje, who had built Sunset Haven and who had always been an advocate and is acknowledged internationally as having expertise in the care of seniors.

Now that this government has told municipalities that the municipal taxpayer is going to pick up the tab for taking care of those old folks, the ones in Sunset Haven, the ones who were hoping — because, you see, the construction's under way for Rapelje Lodge down at the end of Plymouth Road, down by Plymouth Road and Ontario Road. You've been there, I know it. A beautiful landscape. There was some concern because there were some pros and cons about whether or not being adjacent to the hospital was appropriate, but at the end of the day people understood that, yes, this gives these seniors who will be in Rapelje Lodge that much more access to medical treatment should they require it, especially in the case of an emergency.

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But I've got some real fears now for those people who were counting on Rapelje Lodge as a place to be cared for in a nursing home, a home for the aged. The cities of Welland and Thorold can't afford to sustain those operations. It's all part of the downloading of health care and health costs: public health downloaded on to municipalities; social assistance downloaded on to municipalities.

I talked to you about this before, about each of these little bills being a piece of a puzzle that's part of a much larger picture, and when the picture is finally put together and assembled, it's not a very attractive one. It's a picture of destruction and devastation. It's a picture of increased poverty across the whole community. It's a picture that for most of us has only been a part of the reference to encyclopaedias or other books to the Great Depression, yet for so many of our old folks it is not just a picture but a vivid memory which they worked to overcome, hoping never to have to be confronted by it again.

Hospital closings in Niagara are part and parcel of that same puzzle. This Conservative government, Mike Harris, is the one who wants to shut down Port Colborne General

Hospital, not the folks of Port Colborne who built that hospital. It's this government, Mike Harris and the Tories, that is hell-bent on shutting down the Hotel Dieu in St Catharines. They are, and unless we stop them, they're going to do it.

Like I've told you before, these hospitals don't belong to Mike Harris. These hospitals belong to the people, like the people of Port Colborne and Welland and Thorold and St Catharines who literally built them brick by brick, who by subscription through their workplaces donated \$2 a week or \$5 a week, or if they could, \$10 or \$15 a week, who, as they were aging and it came time to consider where they might distribute their modest assets upon their death, made bequests to the building funds of these hospitals — yet another attack on the sick and the young and poor, because fewer hospitals in Niagara is going to mean less access to emergency rooms.

It's going to mean people dying en route to a distant hospital in another community. It's going to mean more unemployment as nurses and support staff are forced on to welfare rolls. It's going to mean less access to acute care beds. It's going to bring with it, I tell you, I'm convinced, privatization of health care, where the scammers and the gougers will take advantage, as they have in the United States, of the fears and desperation of sick people and suffering people, will pick their pockets, a system nurtured by this government's abandonment of health care.

I tell you that people in Welland-Thorold, people across Niagara region know what this government is pulling off. People in Niagara region are mobilizing, gathering in town halls and meetings halls and auditoriums like they never have before. For any of us in this Legislature to be tolerant of these attacks on the sick, the elderly, the young and the poor is in itself criminal, and I tell you I will not condone this conduct.

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** I've listened to the comments made by the members of the Liberal caucus and the New Democratic caucus with respect to this resolution. The resolution seems to be concerned with the issue of property taxes in Ontario. That seems to be the gist: the fear that the reforms our government is putting through are going to increase property taxes throughout this province.

The member for Welland-Thorold is holding up a book, and gosh knows what it says, but I will say it's very strange to hear the two parties that have governed this province for the last 10 years, the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party, who raised taxes 65 times, who literally put this province on the edge of bankruptcy.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Order, please, member for Kingston and The Islands.

**Mr Tilson:** The debt of this province is \$100 billion, and probably by the year 2000 it's going to be \$120 billion.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** And it will be because of your tax cuts.

**Mr Tilson:** Because of your policies, to the member for Kingston and The Islands, the Liberal policies and the New Democratic policies.

*Interjections.*



**Mr Kormos:** Tell us about your deficit and your debt.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member, take your seat, please. Would the members please come to order.

**Mr Kormos:** — taxes that they're generating.

**The Acting Speaker:** Come to order, please, member for Welland-Thorold.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** You don't believe in social programs. You want to destroy social programs.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Cochrane South, come to order.

**Mr Tilson:** It is because of those policies of the former governments that we are entertaining a number of reforms throughout this province. These reforms include a number of things, many of which we have passed, many of which we are in the process of considering in this House and considering in committees.

I believe that when you're looking at this resolution it's really faulty to look at individual, particular topics, whether it be —

*Laughter.*

**Mr Tilson:** The members enjoy that laugh, particularly the two members from the New Democratic caucus over there. I remember them sitting around talking about how they were going to reform property taxes, and they sat on it for four years. They did nothing. They stood up in the House. I remember when Mr Silipo, who is the member for Dovercourt, when he was the minister of Comsoc, stood up and talked how he was going to reform welfare, how he was going to reform social services. We never saw anything, absolutely nothing. They did nothing for four years with respect to those things.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** Call the police. Get the AG to call the police.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Sudbury East, come to order.

**Mr Tilson:** The purpose of these reforms on all of these topics is to stop the bankruptcy that these two parties have put this province into.

One looks at governance. That's one of the issues that's before one of the committees right now with respect to the supercity, the city of Toronto — and it is going to be a supercity, it's going to be a great city. I believe that one needs to look at the governance around the province of Ontario along with these other reforms.

For example, in my riding of Dufferin-Peel, the north half, we have a population of 40,000 people, and I don't think that's different from a lot of the rural communities in our area. I'll tell you something. Do you know how many municipalities we have for that 40,000? We have eight municipalities plus an upper tier, and that's just the north half of the riding. For each politician who's there that's about 1,000 citizens in that area. For each 1,000 people you have a politician.

I will leave it to the municipalities to solve how they're going to go about that, but obviously we can't sustain the type of municipal government that we've had in this province. I mean, many of these jurisdictions were set back in the horse and buggy days when it took a long time to get from municipality to municipality. We need to look at all of those things.

With respect to education in this province, which we've taking off the property tax rolls, someone from the opposition got a bit of a chuckle here earlier today during question period when he commented how during the election their constituents would comment on how it was inappropriate for education to be on the tax rolls. Well, we're taking it off the tax rolls with respect to the residential tax part of it; \$5.5 billion is what we're spending today.

**Mr Gerretsen:** It was \$5.4 billion.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Kingston and The Islands, come to order.

**Mr Tilson:** It is estimated that by the year 2000 it will be \$6.2 billion. All of these things we can't continue. We can't continue the way your governments have continued to operate this province.

With respect to social services, there's nothing unusual; it's been going on for some time that municipalities have been undertaking welfare in this province. There's nothing unusual about that.

**Mr Gerretsen:** But they don't even pay 20%.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Kingston and The Islands, come to order.

**Mr Tilson:** The member for Welland-Thorold talked about social housing. Do you know how many bureaucracies your government — the New Democratic government — and the Liberal government created? You created four bureaucracies with respect to social housing in this province. Why do you need four bureaucracies to administer social housing? You've got the ministry, you've got the Ontario Housing Corp, you've got the regional and you've got the local housing authorities. Well, that's going to change. You don't need all those bureaucracies. 1650

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** What are you talking about?

**Mr Tilson:** The former Minister of Housing says what am I talking about. You're the one who started all this mess.

There have been numerous requests from municipalities across the province to ask the province to transfer the control of management of social housing to them. There have been requests from them. In March 1996 there was a report from the board of directors of Peel Living which promoted local control of social housing. In this report the benefits of local control include savings through staff restructuring, consolidation of administration, enhanced purchasing power, improved long-term maintenance, the elimination of confusion on the part of the public and easier complaint resolution, and it goes on. Those have been requests by municipalities to deal with the issue of social housing.

You can't just look at individual items. The former government didn't look at anything. They just let it all slide. They didn't talk about anything. You have to have a plan. You had absolutely zero plans for the four years you were in power, and you people didn't do much better when you were in power.

That is the aim of our government with respect to a complete reform of all the items, whether it be for policing, whether it be for health care, whether it be for education, whether it be for every single item of this government. We have no choice.



I have yet to hear suggestions from the New Democratic caucus or the Liberal caucus as to how they are going to pay down the debt of this province. Have you got any bright ideas?

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Would the member for Dufferin-Peel take his seat for a moment. This is really getting out of hand. I can hardly hear the member for Dufferin-Peel and I'm sitting right next to him. You will get your chance.

**Mr Tilson:** I'd like to address some of my comments with respect to other areas that our government is entering into reform in the province, and that has to do with policing. In many rural areas the townships do not pay for policing. Some do, some don't. In my area a number of the townships do not pay for policing, and I'm sure that's the same throughout this province. That's another area of reform. In my area we've got a chief of police in Orangeville, we've got a chief of police in Shelburne and we've got the OPP in Shelburne. We've also got a regional police force in Caledon and they have a chief of police there. That's four bureaucracies for roughly 80,000 people.

There is a puzzle, believe it or not, members of the New Democratic caucus, who never had a plan in the first place. There is a plan and we're outlining the plan. In fact, there's nothing different from what we were talking about when we first got elected.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** Oh yes, you increase property taxes.

**Mr Tilson:** Well, if you read it, you've got too many politicians, you've had too much governance, and the result is that the province has gone bankrupt.

**Mr Agostino:** We will not close hospitals.

**Mr Tilson:** With respect to hospitals, I'd like to talk about hospitals.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Hamilton East, come to order.

**Mr Tilson:** With respect to hospitals, in my riding we're the first area in the province of Ontario for a voluntary merger. The minister talked of it today. The Shelburne District Hospital and the Dufferin Area Hospital merged into one voluntarily. We're not going to take the credit for that. It was actually started by the Liberals, believe it or not, continued by the New Democratic government, and finally it's being finished with us.

That really is the type of restructuring with respect to health care that should be going on around this province. Again, you people started it. Take credit for it, for heaven's sake, instead of slamming us. The same goes for the New Democratic caucus. You should be proud of what you've done. I know we're proud of what we've done, believe it or not.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Tilson:** You stand there and you rant and rave, but I'm telling you that this is going to save substantial amounts. In my riding, we're building a new hospital. We've restructured. It's taken 10 years to get to that stage.

**Mr Curling:** You're closing others all over the place.

**Mr Tilson:** You can say we're closing others all over the place. Believe it or not, your two parties were emptying beds. You were having empty beds all over the place and now you're talking about how we're closing hospitals.

Whether it's education, whether it's health care, whether it's policing, whether it's local governance, if you don't do something about it, the place is going to go bankrupt. We're going to save this province from going into bankruptcy, which is exactly what your two governments have done.

I will be voting against the resolution. I don't think it's well thought out. I don't think there is any suggestion as to what the future is going to be, but quite frankly, that has been the story of the New Democratic and Liberal caucuses. They never have had the foresight as to where they're going in this province. They never will and they certainly haven't now.

**Mr Curling:** As I listened to my colleague from Dufferin-Peel, I don't know how he doesn't bite his tongue because of many of the things that he's saying, the strategy that his government has put in place with this dumping of the costs on the municipality without any negotiation whatsoever, none at all, just saying, "You take it over," as if to say there are two kinds of taxpayers; that is from his Mike Harris, who had said there is only one taxpayer, and this one taxpayer is paying dearly for the moves of this Conservative government.

This government came into power and, first, administered the most vicious blow on the most vulnerable and the poor in our society, and then is bringing about this dumping of this cost on to the municipality, with even the general welfare from 20% to 50%. I want to ask the member, who is going to pay for that? Where is this money going to come from? Our taxes are going to go up, and they're going to go up dramatically, paying on the backs of the poor. You can see, Madam Speaker, as you sit in here day by day and watch the expression on these Conservative members' faces, how blank it is: no concern at all for the municipalities, no concern at all for the citizens of our province.

In Scarborough North and in Scarborough, we have residents who are concerned whether they can send their kids to school, can afford it, whether their kids who will graduate out of university will be bankrupt.

In the meantime, there will be tremendous concern in other areas: housing, for instance. I just want in the short time I have to emphasize a bit on housing and the tremendous impact it's going to have on those people who are looking for affordable housing. Many of those homes are in terrible condition, millions of dollars needed for repairs, but no concern at all, when it is dumped on the municipality, of where this money is going to come from.

The federal government also, which should be addressed, is trying to pass on some of those responsibilities to the province. The province in the meantime is trying quickly to pass it to the municipality. Who is going to pay for all this high cost of repairs? It is the taxpayers: not only the normal taxpayer, but the poor taxpayers, who are living in some terrible conditions. I would ask some of these Conservative members to go to



some of these homes and sit there for a moment, talk to these people of the struggles they have.

The average income of many of the people in Scarborough and across Metro is about \$20,000 or \$25,000, and they have to live on that kind of income. Furthermore, to be asked now by this government to pay more, all because they want to give their rich friends a tax break — they are blindly running into this and saying, "We have delivered." We know the old game: Give it to the rich so therefore they can turn around and it can trickle down to the poor. The poor have been waiting for years for the rich to distribute some of that wealth. The bankers, for instance, with the amount of money that they make, the profit they have made, are bragging: "We have done a good job. There's nothing wrong in making \$1 million a year, nothing wrong at all."

As we dump much of the funding on to the municipalities, I would ask one request: Why would this government not negotiate with the municipalities in finding out and taking on many of these responsibilities? That's my comment. I'm sorry the time is not sufficient for me to make some other pertinent remarks I would like to make.

1700

**Mr Bisson:** I've got some 12 minutes to go through what is a fairly complex issue we're dealing with here today with this particular resolution, because it talks about all the work the government is doing to offload its responsibility on to the municipalities. I'm going to try to go through this in some sort of systematic way.

First of all, let's turn our attention back to the election of 1995, and more important, let's turn our attention back even further, before that. We all know the government today prides itself on a document called the Common Sense Revolution. I remember, Madam Speaker, as you would, because you were a member of the former government and you were in this House, as many other people in opposition were, that the third party then, the government today, basically had three promises it made to the people of this province.

They said there would be only one taxpayer, that we had to be conscious as government that no matter what we did at the provincial or municipal levels, we did things consciously knowing there was only one taxpayer. In other words, let's not offload our responsibilities on to everybody else; everybody take their responsibility and let's make the joint tax burden somewhat less for the taxpayers of Ontario.

The other thing they talked about was that they said specifically in the Common Sense Revolution, page 7, that they were not going to download their responsibilities on to municipalities, and second of all, they said they were going to work closely with municipalities in this province to figure out how best to disentangle provincial services that were operating at the time in Ontario.

The third promise they made — I remember this one well, because I knew back then that the government would not be able to maintain this promise because really it didn't want to; it was a bit of a smokescreen — was that they would not take one cent from the health care system.

Keeping that in mind, let's take a look at what this government is doing. This whole resolution is about how this government is moving forward and taking a whole bunch of provincial services and throwing them on to the municipalities so they can pick up not only the service delivery, but can pay the cost of delivering those services.

What are they transferring? They're transferring everything from ambulance services to long-term-care institutions that we have in our communities, like South Centennial Manor in Iroquois Falls, like Golden Manor in Timmins and the Extendicare nursing home in Schumacher. The municipalities will now have to pay 50% of the operating costs of those particular long-term-care institutions. They're throwing over the entire system of community long-term care and they're saying to municipalities, "You're not only going to run it, you're now going to pay 50% of the cost."

They're throwing the entire cost of transit services across Ontario on to the municipalities. No more provincial subsidies for the TTC, for Timmins transit, for Sudbury transit, for Windsor transit or for Ottawa transit, none of it; no more transfers to the municipalities for those particular services. They're transferring the entire responsibility of day care on to the municipalities. They're transferring a whole bunch of municipal roads on to municipalities like Timmins and Matheson and Sudbury and a whole bunch of other municipalities across Ontario. They're transferring entire responsibilities that used to be squarely in the responsibility field of the province, both when it came to funding and operating, on to the municipalities.

What does this mean? It means the municipalities are going to have to try to figure out how to either cut costs so they can afford these services, which means they'll have to cut other services or even those that are being transferred, or they will have to raise property taxes.

I want to share with you a column that appeared in the Timmins Daily Press not more than a couple of days ago. I want to say something: The Timmins Daily Press, owned by Conrad Black, is not a paper that is known to be associated with the New Democratic Party. I would say more than likely they're probably more closely associated with the Conservative Party of Ontario.

They did this particular editorial where they asked people on the streets of the city of Timmins, and here's the question: "What do you think the city will do given the high cost it will face" when it comes to transferring all these services on to the municipalities? Here's what citizens in the city of Timmins said — just a random survey. Oliver Cadeau says: "The city keeps saying it won't raise taxes, but where is the money going to come from? They'll have to cut services somewhere." Mark Beaudette is a mobile crane operator in the city of Timmins, "They'll raise taxes. It won't go over too well (with taxpayers)," but the cities have no choice because of what the province is doing.

Jason Gagnon, a person who works in the city of Timmins: What's the municipality going to do? "They'll raise taxes. I don't want them to. We pay enough taxes already." But what else is the municipality going to do?

Lise McCallion: "I don't want them to raise taxes, but they might anyway." What choice do they have?



**Mr Bradley:** What happened to Hazel?

**Mr Bisson:** Not related to Hazel McCallion, I don't think.

Sally Cyr, who is a retiree in the city of Timmins says: "They've cut snowplowing already. I can't see where they could cut anymore."

The long and the short of the story is all the people who were interviewed in this article said that the municipality is going to raise taxes and cut services to offset what the provincial government is doing to municipalities.

What is this government doing, as well as transferring services? They're breaking their promise that they made to the people in the election of 1995 when they said there was only one taxpayer and when they said they weren't going to offload the responsibilities, both financial and operating, on to the municipalities. They're breaking that promise.

Then the government, don't forget, as I said at the beginning, had another promise. This is really interesting. I remember my leader, Bob Rae, at the time saying: "Can the Tories be serious? They're saying they're not going to cut one cent out of health care." By transferring over — you've got to think about how this is going to work once it's transferred over — long-term-care responsibilities, ambulances and all those other health care services on to the municipality, does that mean the province is going to be expending less money in health care on those services?

Of course it does, and what's going to happen is the municipalities are going to do the cutting for them. So they are cutting health care expenditure, there's no two ways about it, and what's worse, the government is now going to say, "We saved X billions of dollars in health care by transferring it over to the municipality," and do you know what they're going to do? They're going to go and cut another \$1 billion from the system to offset it.

The scenario is you transfer \$1 billion of cost from the province on to the municipality. The province says: "We haven't cut health care, not us. We haven't cut a cent." Then they're going to go out and they're going to cut another \$1 billion in the system to be able to pay for their tax break. That's what they're going to be doing. There's no two ways about it.

What does this mean to the integration of services? How are you supposed to run an integrated provincial health care system when the province runs the hospitals and the municipalities now end up running the ambulances and long-term care and the community services? Tell me how that makes sense. Tell me where this common sense lies in the fact that the provincial government, which is supposed to run health care, is going to hand over more than half of the health care services to the municipality. It's going to increase the bureaucracy because the municipalities will have to create a bureaucracy to be able to run these institutions, and it means, to me, that with more bureaucracy there will be more cost.

What does it mean to the integration of those services within the province? There will be no integration. Municipalities across this province are going to be competing to ratchet down the costs and the services in our municipalities to be able to offset what this government is doing.

It means not only will we be paying higher property taxes at the end of all this, but we will be getting fewer services, and mark my words, that will be this government's undoing.

The other thing — I touched on it very quickly — is that what the government is doing also flies in the face of what else they promised in the Common Sense Revolution, which was they were going to diminish the amount of government that is in people's lives. There was going to be less government. They said they were going to do all of this in order to get less government.

When you start transferring those services and giving them to somebody else to do, do people actually think nobody is going to run them? As it is now, we have a provincial bureaucracy within the various ministries that runs these services. You transfer those services on to the municipality and somebody has got to run them. There's going to be an increased bureaucracy because rather than having a provincial bureaucracy that runs the service for the province, you're going to have regional and district bureaucracies that are going to run those services in districts or regions, depending on how they're organized.

We are today downstairs at committee hearings listening to the presentations of people about Bill 103 and what's happening with the amalgamation of the city of Timmins. To the people of northern Ontario and to the other people of this province, don't think you're getting off the hook because they're just doing it in Toronto, because you're next in line. What you're going to see is what's inside the Who Does What recommendations, which is to administer all of these services, the Crombie report and the Who Does What Panel recommended amalgamation of municipalities outside of Metropolitan Toronto to run these services.

1710

When health care and housing and ambulances and all of those services are transferred over to the municipality, the government's going to move with another piece of legislation, with time, to amalgamate municipalities into larger entities so that you can have yet larger bureaucracies within areas to deal with delivering these services. What that means for smaller municipalities like Iroquois Falls, Cochrane, Matheson, all of those smaller municipalities that now have municipal councils, is that they will be part of a larger community.

Let me just draw the boundaries of one community. I don't know if this is what it's going to end up being, but let's imagine the new city of Timmins is Timmins, Iroquois Falls, Cochrane and Matheson, and you have a new city council to administer all of the services in that area. As it is now, it's difficult for people in those communities to find the dollars to do what they need within their own communities when it comes to municipal services. But imagine, if you will, when over half of the population of the new city will be in the city of Timmins itself, if it goes that way.

I want to say that this is not a fait accompli yet and the government hasn't actually proposed the legislation — this is where it's going — but the point is that towns like Cochrane and Iroquois Falls and Matheson are going to get lost in the new municipal councils because they will not have the representation at the council table



to advocate for their communities. What it means to those municipalities is that people will get fewer services, even above what's going on, and more importantly, the municipalities will be less accountable to those people because they will not have the strength in numbers on those municipal councils to deal with it.

The other thing, just in wrapping up, that I want to say on this is that the government is saying, "We're doing this as the government because we want to deal with the debt." Let's not kid ourselves. I'm willing to bet and stand in my place at this point and say that at the end of all of this you haven't done anything to deal with the debt, because your deficit is not going to change anything from what you're doing, from your own figures. You're saying: "It's a wash; \$6 billion out, \$6 billion in. We can argue about the numbers but it's a wash." We both can agree that you're not going to attack your debt. I say there's an offset that's not realistic.

The other thing is that the real reason the government is doing this is very simple: Conservatives, especially ring-wing Conservatives like we have here in Ontario now, the right-wing Republican Conservatives of Ontario, the remakes of the Reform Party, do not believe in social programs. They don't believe that the state should provide health care services, that the state should provide housing programs for people. They're nodding their heads in agreement with me, so that people back home are able to tell.

What this is all about is a smokescreen to dismember all of those programs so that in the end it will be the law of the fittest: He or she who has the bucks will live well and those who don't, to darn with them, as the government is saying. This is where you're going, and you can nod your head in the affirmative, because that's exactly where you're going with this. You're undermining social programs because as Conservatives — as right-wing Conservatives, not the old red Tories — you do not believe that the government, the state, has a responsibility to make sure that Ontarians have access to social programs so that they are able to live in a better Ontario. That's where you're going. Shame on you.

**Mr Dave Boushy (Sarnia):** If you look at the motion of the opposition, it states that the "government is dumping over \$6.4 billion in service costs to municipalities...." This statement is not quite accurate. It takes reforms out of context by ignoring the fact that we are removing the burden of education. I don't think you, the opposition, believe that statement yourself.

**Mr Bisson:** Somebody told him if he plays the good guy —

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Cochrane South, come to order.

**Mr Boushy:** Education is a cost that, as the opposition knows, continued to rise, that has risen in the past. Seniors on fixed incomes, who as everybody knows have been faced with paying ever-growing education levies, will benefit from our changes to what level of government delivers that service. I think we all know how many seniors have approached us in the past and said, "Take the education costs off." You heard it; I heard it.

Al Smith, the president of the United Senior Citizens of Ontario, which represents almost 500,000 seniors, has

indicated support for our government's initiative. I'd like to quote him. He said, "It's something seniors have wanted for quite some time."

**Mr Bradley:** What date is that?

**Mr Boushy:** My friend Mr Bradley knows that he has heard it from many seniors who say all the time, "Take the education costs off." You know that's correct and I know that's correct. Education costs have been out of control for a decade.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Sarnia, take your seat for a moment. Would the members please come to order so I can hear the member for Sarnia. Thank you.

**Mr Boushy:** The facts are that between 1985 and 1995 total student enrolment increased by only 16%, inflation increased by about 40%, but school board spending increased by 82% and property taxes went up by more than 120%. As a former member of Sarnia city council, I know very well that one of the big frustrations we have had is the education portion of the property tax mill. The boards decided how much more they wanted to spend —

**Mr Gerretsen:** Everybody agrees on that, Dave; it's the other side we're talking about.

**Mr Boushy:** Now hold on. As you know and as I know, the board of education decides how much money you have to collect. They give the bill to the municipalities and the municipalities collect and take the blame. You know that and I know that. It's a huge burden on them and it's a burden that residential property taxpayers should not have to bear. By taking over this huge expense, our provincial government is removing this burden from municipalities and residential property taxpayers. We will be able to refocus resources in the classroom. In exchange, municipalities are being asked to assume more responsibility for social assistance, which I want to stress is a declining expense.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Boushy:** I want to quote what somebody said in my own riding in Lambton county. The social services director, Ken Dick, noted almost immediately after the announcement was made — and it was quoted in the Sarnia Observer; my friends there read it.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Boushy:** I'll tell you that the sign held up by the opposition, "Boushy Blasts Health Minister," is misleading. The opposition knows that the Minister of Health happens to be one of my favourite ministers. I have every confidence in him and you know that. I told you that.

I want to go back to Ken Dick. He said, "Quite frankly, I am pleased with the fact that delivery has been moved to a single tier. Combining the two programs and delivering them at the local level will mean better management and service. I think the client will know who is responsible for the program."

This is an article from the London Free Press this morning, February 1. Let me quote from it:

"The head of social services and employment for London says transferring responsibility for welfare to the city could be a positive development and allow a more seamless delivery of service. This will be accomplished by eliminating duplication and overlap and creating more competitive environments for delivery of services and



more creative forms of organization and cooperation among municipalities.”

I believe the changes are important and long overdue. We all know that the system no longer works and people don't know who to hold accountable. That's why this government was formed by the people of Ontario, who agreed the problem had to be tackled, something had to be changed.

At the provincial level we'll continue to provide leadership in such areas as policy development, standards and giving legislation to the people who need it. But where it makes sense for the province to take total responsibility for finances and providing services to citizens, where it makes sense for the councils and municipalities to be the primary provider, they should take over. Where it makes sense for the province and municipalities to share in the funding and provision of services, we are ready to fund our portion, and so are the municipalities. They have the capabilities to carefully manage new program responsibilities and they have plenty of opportunities to pass along tax cuts to residents and savings to businesses.

1720

Now that we are clearly defining who is responsible for what, I think taxpayers and voters will be putting more pressure than ever on all levels of government, including members of their own city councils. We're starting with a simplified arrangement between the province and municipalities. This will create, in my opinion, a delivery system that will provide higher-quality services at less cost to the taxpayers.

Let's move to the funding of welfare. I want to remind you again that of caseload has dropped significantly since we took office. It will be shared on a 50-50 basis. This fair division of costs will also give municipalities an incentive to implement effective and productive workfare programs.

This province will continue to play a large role in child care. We'll cost-share the program 50-50 and we'll set comprehensive provincial quality and safety standards to safeguard our children.

Building on reforms already made in long-term care, the next step is the creation of a new provincial long-term care agency. The agency will coordinate the system with province-wide standards, and councils and municipalities and the province will share in the funding for these services.

Our government believes that child welfare should be part of a larger system of services for children and children with special needs. This system should be fully funded and managed by the province. We will assume responsibility for full funding of children's aid societies.

Our government knows we have a significant role to play in addressing violence against women, so we'll assume responsibility for full funding of shelters for abused women.

Our government will work closely with the municipalities during this time of change to make sure they receive the training and help needed to assume the new responsibilities. We're also setting up a permanent \$1-million community reinvestment fund to ensure that special

community needs are met. This replaces and increases by 50% the current municipal support program.

When you add up all these figures on both sides of the ledger, you see that municipalities will have tax room to move, to manoeuvre as a result of the changes we have made. I tell you, as a former member of city council, that we have councils that are responsible, closer to the people. They know the needs of the community as well as or better than you and I do. Let me say they probably manage their money better than the Liberals, and the NDP that held office for the last two terms.

By the year 2000 municipalities should have enough room to reduce property taxes by 10%. If I were still there, I would insist that this be done. I can assure you I have every confidence that it will be done.

We're ensuring that supports are in place as we make these fundamental changes, and we're ensuring that resources will be used to the maximum benefit of every community through a plan that's more responsive to local needs because services will be delivered by the level of government best suited to meet the needs of the people who use the services. From now on the people of Ontario will benefit from smaller, simpler, more accountable and less costly government.

**Mr Bradley:** I'm going to be uncharacteristically brief because I want to share some time with my colleagues, but I nevertheless will be succinct in my comments because all of this downloading is causing great distress to the people of the Niagara region and indeed to the people across this province.

The so-called favour that the provincial government is doing for the regional municipality of Niagara and the various municipalities such as St Catharines will cost \$73 million to the people of St Catharines and area, a 16% increase in taxes, \$310 for the average Niagara household. If you think you're doing them a favour, you are not, and I can't wait to see the faces of the Tory councillors, both at the local level and the regional level, when they see what you're doing to them, because that will put them to the test. They will have to either defend the local municipality or apologize for the Harris government.

I'm confident all of my good friends who are Conservatives in the local councils will stand up for their local municipalities and not simply apologize for a government that is taking money from the municipal level; in other words, imposing taxes of a regressive kind that do not take into account a person's ability to pay and giving it back to rich people through the income tax scheme, which most people consider to be bizarre at this time, including some members of the government caucus.

So when the people see the Hotel Dieu Hospital in St Catharines under threat of closing, the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital, the Port Colborne Hospital, the Douglas Memorial Hospital in Fort Erie, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Hospital, all of these because of a \$44-million cut in hospital funding being threatened now, they are going to be extremely unhappy. I'll be looking forward to my colleagues from the Niagara region who sit in the Legislative Assembly defending all of these hospitals and their need to the people of our area.

What you have done is you've taken education off the property tax, and no one is objecting to that — at least



few people are — but that is a very predictable expense now and one that is likely to be stable or even decline because of declining enrolment. But you've thrust on to the municipalities all those costs which are either unpredictable or very likely to rise substantially. That's why it's going to cost our municipality and others so much more money.

I well recall Mike Harris during the election campaign, when asked by Robert Fisher of Global TV during the leaders' debate, "So, does this mean you're going to close hospitals?" Premier Harris — then Conservative leader Harris — said, "We have no plans to close hospitals." Well, that's going to be a surprise to the people of Lambton or St Catharines or other parts of the Niagara region, or Hamilton or all the other areas where you're closing hospitals or bleeding them dry simply by taking away their funding. Meanwhile, the government members thump their desks and clap for the crew that's the cabinet and the advisers when I believe they should be fighting for their own municipalities, and I hope they will.

So when I look at the crazy tax scheme that you have, when I see the property tax which is going to do nothing but increase, I start to agree with David Crombie, who has been commissioned by this government to give some advice, when he says: "I don't think there's a soul left standing that actually agrees with them. In our final report, we wanted to make sure people understood that burdening municipalities with the cost of social services was absolutely the wrong thing to do. The only way they can deal with an increasing welfare case load or any long-term care is either cut service or raise taxes, which either means you're going to hit the poor or drive out business. This is not an appropriate public policy." I agree with David Crombie when he says that.

1730

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre):** I welcome the opportunity to join in today's debate on the motion put forward by the Leader of the Opposition, a motion which I believe characterizes what we have come to expect from the official opposition: a criticism of the government's actions without suggesting an alternative.

The Leader of the Opposition has called on the government to develop alternatives that don't cost taxpayers more dollars and to develop these alternatives in consultation with municipalities. That is precisely what this government is doing. We are introducing changes and reforms that will help municipalities in this province to deliver services more efficiently, with less waste, less complication and less duplication. Many reforms we are introducing were recommended by the Who Does What panel, a panel made up of representatives from municipalities throughout the province.

Many of the changes we have introduced grant municipalities the powers they have been asking us to give them for years. The impetus of this change is also important. It is something that previous governments at various levels have refused to recognize in the past: that there is only one taxpayer in the province, that tax dollars don't have to be passed through layer after layer of government and bureaucracy, and most importantly, a commitment to give taxpayers the best value for their dollar.

On education we have begun this transition period by taking education off the property tax bill. It will relieve the taxpayers of more than \$5.4 billion. In the past 10 years we have seen school enrolment increase by 16%. At the same time school board spending has increased by 82% and taxes have gone through the roof by more than 120%.

We have started by taking \$5.4 billion off the property tax bill, a share of the tax bill that has been growing at an average rate of 5% a year for the last 10 years. But removing education from property tax isn't just about giving taxpayers a break, although it has been welcome news, particularly for those senior citizens who have been asking us to take education off their property tax bill for years.

The people of Ontario have made it known that education should be fair and equitable for all children of this province, that they want an education system that treats students living in northern or rural communities, like Alcona Beach or Minesing in my riding, the same way as students living in suburbs or inner-city neighbourhoods. By taking education off the property tax base we are ensuring that all children in Ontario get the same opportunity for a first-rate education and the same chance to move to the head of the class.

We are also removing the power of school boards to grab taxes to pay for lavish board offices, salary increases and perks for trustees.

Not only are we restructuring how education will be funded, we are introducing reforms that will improve what our students are learning by introducing standardized testing and a focus on the basics of reading, writing, math and science.

On welfare, the leader of the official opposition has also spoken of the reforms we've introduced with respect to how social services like welfare are funded. First let's put these reforms in an historical context by looking at how social services used to be funded.

The federal government used to fund 40% of welfare costs while the provincial government paid 40% and municipalities paid the remaining 20%. The federal government no longer funds this service, so we have proposed a 50-50 cost-sharing between the province and municipalities. The new system will be easier to understand for the people who need to use it. The current system has been complex and forces people to know whether to go to the city office, the county office or the provincial office. Our changes will streamline that.

As a safeguard against unforeseen tough economic times, the province is establishing a social assistance reserve fund for communities that find themselves in this situation. We are starting this fund by making an initial contribution of \$700 million. The province will continue to fund services for children and women's shelters.

On revenue-sharing, to assist municipalities we are allowing them to share in the revenues generated from fines collected under the Provincial Offences Act, something they've been asking us to do for many years.

In my riding the city of Barrie has long asked for this opportunity, and we are asking all taxpayers to pay for policing, which makes the system more fair. Currently only 85% of municipalities pay for police services.



On municipal governance and amalgamation, I believe that most municipalities have demonstrated that they are capable of spending tax dollars responsibly. Take the city of Barrie, for example, in my riding of Simcoe Centre. Barrie is the fastest-growing region in the country, with its population expected to almost double in the next 15 years. As a city councillor in Barrie I worked to bring in zero-increase budgets for taxpayers while making sure taxpayers could count on good services.

Municipalities have proven they are capable of better service delivery, and reforms we have announced with respect to amalgamation and election finances, for example, will help them to do just that.

We have also heard the opposition criticize amalgamation and the notion that a unified city of Toronto is less attractive than seven competing neighbouring cities. This is an argument I find hard to accept. If done properly, which I know is everyone's objective, residents can expect better services for their tax dollars.

In my own riding of Simcoe Centre, municipalities have proven that change is possible and that amalgamation of service delivery can have benefits for taxpayers. On its own initiative, the county of Simcoe underwent restructuring in 1993. The county restructured from 28 to 16 municipalities. These changes considered complex issues, just as the seven cities in Metro will have to face, such as roads, sewers, water, garbage pickup, urban planning etc. In Simcoe county local politicians were able to address all these issues, including the need to accommodate rural and urban interests.

Even more recently, the towns of Innisfil and Bradford-West Gwillimbury merged their police forces to form the South Simcoe Police Service. These are two municipalities with many different interests, an argument we often hear as a reason against a unified Metro. Take Bradford-West Gwillimbury, not far from Newmarket, the home of the Holland Marsh, Ontario's agricultural heartland; and take Innisfil, a string of several smaller municipalities on the south shore of Lake Simcoe with year-round and seasonal residents. At first glance these are two municipalities that don't seem to have much in common, but local politicians had the vision to recognize that a unified police force can provide better service at lower cost to taxpayers.

We are now asking the seven cities in Metropolitan Toronto to go through the same process. We have heard the opposition criticize the notion of a unified city but we haven't heard any alternatives for how these seven cities can work more closely together. As it stands now we have one urban community that is governed by seven city councils, seven parks and recreation departments, seven planning departments, six fire departments and seven mayors, yet these cities already share policing and transportation. What is the rationale that other services can't be shared?

On property taxes, we've also seen the opposition's resistance to property tax assessment reform. We have discrepancies in Ontario that are costing \$100 million in lost revenues each year because of appeals in Metro Toronto.

Today's system is hardly fair to taxpayers. In my own riding, municipalities use different years of assessment to

tax residential property. If you live in Barrie, you pay based on 1984 rates. If you live in Springwater, you pay based on 1992 rates. If you live in Innisfil, Bradford-West Gwillimbury or Essa, however, it gets a little bit more complicated. Residents in old West Gwillimbury, now part of Bradford, pay based on 1975 rates, their neighbours in the already existing area of Bradford pay based on 1980 rates, while New Tecumseth residents pay based on 1984 rates. In Innisfil, taxpayers pay based on 1992 rates, but in nearby Essa you can be paying based on 1940, 1984 or 1980 rates, depending on whether or not you live in old Essa, the former part of Innisfil or Sunnidale township. This is just a glimpse of one small part of the province.

In Toronto, however, we know that the problem is even more pronounced. We have a system that sees some owners in some of the wealthiest neighbourhoods in Toronto pay property taxes based on assessments made shortly after the Second World War, while young families starting out in the GTA pay today's market rates.

We have become accustomed to the opposition criticizing the government's actions, which as we know is the opposition's job to do, but the opposition has fallen short of its responsibilities. It has called on the government to consult with municipalities, which we have done. It has asked the government to introduce reforms that won't increase costs for taxpayers, which we have done. It has called on the government to be fair, which we have done, by funding education equally throughout the province, by requiring everyone to pay their fair share of police costs and by reforming the property tax system so that no matter where you live, you pay based on the same rules.

The opposition has called on the government to follow the principles of disentanglement, which we have done by streamlining service delivery and giving municipalities greater freedom to work together to deliver those services. The Golden task force report on the GTA found that, "We have reached the point where the status quo is no longer an option. The GTA needs comprehensive change on a number of fronts. Without it, the region's economic competitiveness and prosperity will decline."

The changes we have introduced indicate that we are not satisfied with the status quo and that we have recognized that we must move forward to ensure economic competitiveness in Metro, in the GTA and in the rest of the province. The government is working to provide solutions for Ontario, solutions to get this province working again. I look forward to working with the municipalities in my riding as we embark on this exciting change.

1740

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** I am pleased to speak to today's opposition motion. It gives me the opportunity to tell many other Ontarians the kind of information that we heard about. Right in my own town, in Windsor, we had a task force head to Windsor on Friday and we heard some very fascinating information. I guess the summary of that is quite simple: "Tories Put Taxpayer on Hook." I think that says it all.

Of all the speakers today of the government party, what they fail to mention is the significant property tax explosion that will result from the actions that the



government has announced this month. We know in Windsor, we know in LaSalle, that this eventually will be the case.

I'd like to specifically mention the city administrator of LaSalle, who took the time to come to speak to the panel in Windsor and talk about just one road transfer, a portion of Highway 18. It's an eight-kilometre stretch. They have been given a one-time grant of about \$500,000. They have just a brief estimate of what it would cost to bring that road even to a minimum standard. The cost of doing that is \$1.5 million. Ken Antaya made an estimate that just for that one stretch of road that has been dumped on the town of LaSalle, we are looking at a property tax increase in the town of LaSalle of 7% to 8% over the next 10 years. Again, that's just to bring it up to the most minimum standard.

The government makes the argument that it's just a local road. The reality is that 75% of people on this stretch of Highway 18 are from other parts of the county, so clearly that is not the case. We have been besieging the minister's office with information more and more about just this one road being dumped, because just one road is costing a significant increase in property tax of 7% to 8% per year for the next 10 years, never mind everything else you've been dumping on the cities and towns across Ontario.

If I may speak to the health system in Windsor, we are going to be saddled with additional costs in Windsor and Essex county for long-term health. If the government members understood how critical a situation we currently have in Windsor and Essex county where health care is concerned, I think they would fear having to come to Windsor and perchance falling sick and ending up in one of our hospitals. It is clearly the case that we have hit a disaster, and it is the responsibility of the Minister of Health to look seriously at Windsor and area to see what kind of funding mechanism is a responsible way to equitably fund people who live in Essex county for health services.

Just as a summary, I would like to mention one individual who spoke to us very eloquently, John Curran in the county of Essex, the city administrator for Essex. This gentleman participated on the Who Does What subpanel relating to social services and the dumping of those on the community. The entire subcommittee was so surprised by the outcome, that this was actually dumped, he was speechless. What he said in brief about the Who Does What exercise was, "What has recently been described by Premier Harris in one of his television spots as a complex and dilapidated wire system can now be depicted as a bowl of spaghetti." Here's a gentleman very well known in our community and an avid participant of your subcommittee, and you refuse to acknowledge that this gentleman made sense.

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** I rise and I am glad to have this opportunity to speak in favour, of course, of our motion.

**Mr Hardeman:** In favour? Surely not.

**Mr Cordiano:** Of course, it's a surprise to the members opposite why we would be condemning them for their shortcomings. It is obvious that this government hasn't taken the events of the last couple of weeks very

seriously. In fact, they completely ignore the realities that we have put forward, trying to outline for them the fact that they are completely obliterating the kind of quality of life that we've seen in this province developed over not just one generation, but several generations: hospitals being closed at the mere whim of a minister who says, "We have to close these hospitals because we have to save X number of dollars." Why? So that this government can then bring about its 30% income tax cut.

David Crombie on the Who Does What panel, the architect of that plan, has told this government that their dumping on to municipalities of social costs, social housing, long-term care and payments for social assistance is completely wrongheaded. It's the worst thing that could come about in this province, in the history of this province. It is so fundamentally flawed that the Metro board of trade saw fit to condemn this government for its plan to move in that direction. No less than the Metro board of trade, which has supported this government with the rest of its agenda, says this is the worst thing that could happen to Metropolitan Toronto. They are ignoring the advice of expert after expert who say that this downloading will result in municipalities being crippled and unable to meet those obligations in the future.

So I just conclude by saying this government isn't listening, and it's no surprise that they're not listening. They're putting forward this terrible ad campaign that perpetuates and continues to propagandize the Tory agenda, trying to sell this terrible idea to Ontarians.

**Mr Agostino:** Madam Speaker, I've heard a number of my colleagues across the floor talk about the educational component of the moves and the announcements that were made. It's almost as if they have come up with a brain wave and figured out that people don't want to pay education taxes through their property taxes and this was the answer to all of that.

But what the members across the floor are not telling you very clearly is the tradeoff involved here. One can argue legitimately that education is not going on property taxes. One can argue that hard services at the municipal level belong on property taxes: roads, sewers, infrastructure. Those types of tradeoffs are legitimate and fair tradeoffs that can occur.

What is unfair and what has happened here with this massive downloading is, anybody in their right mind who believes that long-term care somehow belongs on the backs of municipal property taxpayers — that same senior citizen who does not want to pay for education, who you believe is now going to be relieved, that same senior citizen now has to pay for social services, has to pay for long-term care, has to pay for GO trains, has to pay for ambulance services, has to pay for local health services. You have taken away a cost that is relatively stable and you've imposed on the backs of taxpayers at the local level costs that cannot be controlled.

Long-term care: We have an aging population. We know that the cost of long-term care is going to increase. The members across the floor keep talking about this being revenue-neutral. Maybe you can tell the residents of my community how this is going to be revenue-neutral. We're talking about \$121 million added to the



backs of taxpayers in Hamilton-Wentworth as a result of your government.

Frankly, it isn't only the council whiners, as your Premier likes to call them. It's not those council whiners only; it's members of your own caucus. The members from Hamilton West, Hamilton Mountain and Wentworth East have expressed concerns about what your government is doing. The regional chairman who sat on the who does what to whom panel has expressed concern. Conservative members of the city council have expressed concern. Are they all wrong? Are they all a bunch of whiners? Are your members of the Legislature on the government side of the House in Hamilton-Wentworth who have complained today wrong? Are they whiners? I don't think so.

Clearly what you have undertaken here is the most massive downloading in the history of this province. You have put the senior citizens in jeopardy, you have put health care in jeopardy, you have put long-term care in jeopardy. This is going to come back to haunt you. You think you can basically pull a fast one on people. You think they're going to blame the municipal councillors, "It's not us, it's the local municipalities." I can tell you, the people of Ontario are brighter than you give them credit for and this is going to come back and lead to the downfall of this government in four years. You're going to regret the fact that you imposed \$425 per taxpayer on my municipality. You continue to screw people across Ontario and you'll pay a hell of a political price for it.

**Mr Gerretsen:** The government members would like us to believe that the whole measure of taking the education costs off the property tax roll and adding on these other costs is a revenue-neutral process. We all have our own rhetoric about this and we all have our own propaganda about this, and I'll admit that, but what I will also say is that the independent treasurers and CAOs of the various municipalities across Ontario have done their own cost analysis. They're not members of your party and they're not members of my party. What conclusion have they come to? They've come to the conclusion that in the city of Kingston, for example, it's going to cost \$23 million more; city of Brantford, \$18 million more; city of Thunder Bay, \$15 million more; Peterborough, \$13 million —

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** Your own mayor told me that is speculative.

**The Acting Speaker:** Attorney General, come to order.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Owen Sound, \$2 million; Metropolitan Toronto, \$387 million.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** It came out of your own mayor's mouth. Go have a chat with your mayor.

**Mr Gerretsen:** The Attorney General says this is all speculation. This is the best speculation that is possible under the circumstances. They have taken the costs of all these services and —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Attorney General, come to order.

**Mr Gerretsen:** They've taken the costs in one year that were provided by both the province and the municipalities, and have simply done the transfers you've done and come up with these additional costs that it's going to

cost on the property tax roll. That's a fact. That is not somebody's propaganda; that is the fact that the treasurers of this province in the various municipalities have come up with.

Let's take a look at the resolution itself. What does the resolution say? The resolution states that the government reconsider its decision to transfer the \$6.4 billion, to develop alternatives, to not add any extra costs to municipalities. You're saying it is not adding any extra costs to municipalities, so what do you have against voting on that particular resolution? It's doing exactly what you're saying all along, that it wouldn't add any extra costs to municipalities.

The second part of it is to "follow the principles of disentanglement in moving hard service costs to municipalities and soft service costs to the province." Every study that's ever been done in this country and elsewhere clearly indicates that municipal costs should be those services that are hard services that are being delivered in municipalities and the province should pay for the soft services. Every study from David Crombie and any other study that's been done in this province clearly indicates that.

What's the third point of our resolution? The third point merely states that whatever the principles are, they be "developed in true consultation with municipalities and agencies to ensure that local property taxes do not increase." You're the government that's talked about a lot of consultation. You haven't done very much of it, but you've done a lot of talking about it. Why are you against this resolution, when every one of the three criteria of the resolution is exactly what you've been preaching all along.

The real reason of course is that you know and I know that what you're really trying to do here is download uncertain costs in the future to municipalities, to a system that you know as well as I do is a regressive tax system. Municipalities simply will not have the ability to react as quickly to any sudden changes as a result of major layoffs, as a result of additional welfare costs that may have to be paid in that particular municipality. That's what this is really all about. Rather than being upfront about it and honest about it, you should tell the people of Ontario that, yes, you cannot agree with this resolution because your scheme in effect does increase the property tax rolls in this province.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr McGuinty has moved opposition day number 2. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

Those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members; a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1755 to 1800.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Members take their seats, please. Mr McGuinty has moved opposition day motion number 2. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time until counted by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Agostino, Dominic  
Bartolucci, Rick

Gerretsen, John  
Grandmaître, Bernard

McLeod, Lyn  
Miclash, Frank



Bisson, Gilles	Gravelle, Michael	Morin, Gilles E.
Boyd, Marion	Hoy, Pat	Patten, Richard
Bradley, James J.	Kormos, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra
Brown, Michael A.	Kwinter, Monte	Ramsay, David
Caplan, Elinor	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Colle, Mike	Lankin, Frances	Sergio, Mario
Cordiano, Joseph	Marchese, Rosario	Silipo, Tony
Crozier, Bruce	Martel, Shelley	Wildman, Bud
Curling, Alvin	Martin, Tony	Wood, Len
Duncan, Dwight	McGuinty, Dalton	

**The Acting Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time until counted by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Arnott, Ted	Harnick, Charles	O'Toole, John
Baird, John R.	Harris, Michael D.	Palladini, Al
Barrett, Toby	Hastings, John	Parker, John L.
Bassett, Isabel	Hodgson, Chris	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Boushy, Dave	Jackson, Cameron	Ross, Lillian

Brown, Jim	Johns, Helen	Shea, Derwyn
Carroll, Jack	Johnson, Bert	Spina, Joseph
Cunningham, Dianne	Johnson, David	Sterling, Norman W.
Danford, Harry	Kells, Morley	Stewart, R. Gary
DeFaria, Carl	Klees, Frank	Tascona, Joseph N.
Eves, Ernie L.	Leach, Al	Tilson, David
Fisher, Barbara	Leadston, Gary L.	Tsubouchi, David H.
Flaherty, Jim	Martiniuk, Gerry	Turnbull, David
Ford, Douglas B.	Maves, Bart	Vankoughnet, Bill
Fox, Gary	Munro, Julia	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Froese, Tom	Murdoch, Bill	Wood, Bob
Gilchrist, Steve	Mushinski, Marilyn	Young, Terence H.
Hardeman, Ernie	Newman, Dan	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 35; the nays are 53.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

It being past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1804.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO  
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

**Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston**

**Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell**

**Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers**

**Senior Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Journals / Greffier adjoint principal et Greffier des journaux: Alex D. McFedries**

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees / Greffière adjointe et Greffière des comités: Deborah Deller**

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Agostino, Dominic	Hamilton East / -Est	L	
Arnott, Ted	Wellington	PC	
Baird, John R.	Nepean	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre du Travail
Barrett, Toby	Norfolk	PC	
Bartolucci, Rick	Sudbury	L	
Bassett, Isabel	St Andrew-St Patrick	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, deputy government House leader / adjointe parlementaire du ministre des Finances, chef parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Beaubien, Marcel	Lambton	PC	parliamentary assistant (rural affairs) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Affaires rurales) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Bisson, Gilles	Cochrane South / -Sud	ND	deputy New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Boushy, Dave	Sarnia	PC	
Boyd, Marion	London Centre / -Centre	ND	
Bradley, James J.	St Catharines	L	deputy opposition leader, opposition House leader / chef adjoint de l'opposition, chef parlementaire de l'opposition
Brown, Jim	Scarborough West / -Ouest	PC	
Brown, Michael A.	Algoma-Manitoulin	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Caplan, Elinor	Oriole	L	
Carr, Gary	Oakville South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / adjoint parlementaire du solliciteur général et du ministre des Services correctionnels
Carroll, Jack	Chatham-Kent	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Castrilli, Annamarie	Downsview	L	
Chiarelli, Robert	Ottawa West / -Ouest	L	
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre / -Centre	ND	
Chudleigh, Ted	Halton North / -Nord	PC	
Churley, Marilyn	Riverdale	ND	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Cleary, John C.	Cornwall	L	
Clement, Tony	Brampton South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Premier / adjointe parlementaire du premier ministre
Colle, Mike	Oakwood	L	
Conway, Sean G.	Renfrew North / -Nord	L	
Cordiano, Joseph	Lawrence	L	
Crozier, Bruce	Essex South / -Sud	L	
Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne	London North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Curling, Alvin	Scarborough North / -Nord	L	deputy opposition House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition



Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Danford, Harry	Hastings-Peterborough	PC	parliamentary assistant (agriculture and food) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire (secteurs Agriculture et Alimentation) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
DeFaria, Carl	Mississauga East / -Est	PC	
Doyle, Ed	Wentworth East / -Est	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Duncan, Dwight	Windsor-Walkerville	L	
<b>Ecker, Hon /</b> <b>L'hon Janet</b>	Durham West / -Ouest	PC	Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Elliott, Brenda	Guelph	PC	
<b>Eves, Hon /</b> <b>L'hon Ernie L.</b>	Parry Sound	PC	Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances
Fisher, Barbara	Bruce	PC	
Flaherty, Jim	Durham Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Ford, Douglas B.	Etobicoke-Humber	PC	
Fox, Gary	Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox-Hastings-Sud	PC	
Froese, Tom	St Catharines-Brock	PC	
Galt, Doug	Northumberland	PC	parliamentary assistant (environment) to the Minister of Environment and Energy / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Environnement) de la ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Gerretsen, John	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	L	chief opposition whip / whip en chef de l'opposition
Gilchrist, Steve	Scarborough East / -Est	PC	parliamentary assistant (municipal affairs – urban) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur urbain) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Grandmaître, Bernard	Ottawa East / -Est	L	
Gravelle, Michael	Port Arthur	L	
Grimmett, Bill	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	PC	parliamentary assistant (tourism) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Tourisme) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Guzzo, Garry J.	Ottawa-Rideau	PC	parliamentary assistant (energy) to the Minister of Environment and Energy / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Énergie) de la ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Hampton, Howard	Rainy River	ND	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie	Oxford	PC	parliamentary assistant (municipal affairs – rural) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur rural) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Harnick, Hon /</b> <b>L'hon Charles</b>	Willowdale	PC	Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
<b>Harris, Hon /</b> <b>L'hon Michael D.</b>	Nipissing	PC	Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Hastings, John	Etobicoke-Rexdale	PC	
<b>Hodgson, Hon /</b> <b>L'hon Chris</b>	Victoria-Haliburton	PC	Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hoy, Pat	Essex-Kent	L	
Hudak, Tim	Niagara South / -Sud	PC	
<b>Jackson, Hon /</b> <b>L'hon Cameron</b>	Burlington South / -Sud	PC	Minister without Portfolio (Seniors Issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (affaires des personnes âgées)
Johns, Helen	Huron	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health / adjointe parlementaire du ministre de la Santé



Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Johnson, Bert	Perth	PC	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Johnson, Hon / L'hon David</b>	Don Mills	PC	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Health, government House leader / président du Conseil de gestion, ministre de la Santé, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Johnson, Ron	Brantford	PC	
Jordan, W. Leo	Lanark-Renfrew	PC	deputy government whip / whip adjoint du gouvernement
Kells, Morley	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	PC	
Kennedy, Gerard	York South / -Sud	L	
Klees, Frank	York-Mackenzie	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Richesses naturelles
Kormos, Peter	Welland-Thorold	ND	
Kwinter, Monte	Wilson Heights	L	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	L	
Lankin, Frances	Beaches-Woodbine	ND	chief New Democratic Party whip / whip en chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Laughren, Floyd	Nickel Belt	ND	
<b>Leach, Hon / L'hon Al</b>	St George-St David	PC	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Leadston, Gary L.	Kitchener-Wilmot	PC	
Marchese, Rosario	Fort York	ND	
Marland, Margaret	Mississauga South / -Sud	PC	
Martel, Shelley	Sudbury East / -Est	ND	
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste Marie	ND	deputy New Democratic Party whip / whip adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Martiniuk, Gerry	Cambridge	PC	
Maves, Bart	Niagara Falls	PC	
McGuinty, Dalton	Ottawa South / -Sud	L	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
McLean, Allan K.	Simcoe East / -Est	PC	
McLeod, Lyn	Fort William	L	
Miclash, Frank	Kenora	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Morin, Gilles E.	Carleton East / -Est	L	Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président de la Chambre et Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Munro, Julia	Durham-York	PC	
Murdoch, Bill	Grey-Owen Sound	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
<b>Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn</b>	Scarborough-Ellesmere	PC	Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Newman, Dan	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for native affairs / adjoint parlementaire du ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
North, Peter	Elgin	Ind	
O'Toole, John R.	Durham East / -Est	PC	
Ouellette, Jerry J.	Oshawa	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Transports
<b>Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al</b>	York Centre / -Centre	PC	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Parker, John L.	York East / -Est	PC	
Patten, Richard	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	L	
Pettit, Trevor	Hamilton Mountain	PC	
Phillips, Gerry	Scarborough-Agincourt	L	
Pouliot, Gilles	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	ND	
Preston, Peter L.	Brant-Haldimand	PC	
Pupatello, Sandra	Windsor-Sandwich	L	
Ramsay, David	Timiskaming	L	



Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Rollins, E.J. Douglas	Quinte	PC	
Ross, Lillian	Hamilton West / -Ouest	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
<b>Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.</b>	Leeds-Grenville	PC	Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels
Ruprecht, Tony	Parkdale	L	
<b>Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob</b>	Mississauga West / -Ouest	PC	Minister without Portfolio (Privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation)
<b>Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William</b>	Eglinton	PC	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Sergio, Mario	Yorkview	L	
Shea, Derwyn	High Park-Swansea	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Sheehan, Frank	Lincoln	PC	
Silipo, Tony	Dovercourt	ND	deputy New Democratic Party leader / chef adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Skarica, Toni	Wentworth North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Smith, Bruce	Middlesex	PC	
<b>Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John</b>	Mississauga North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Education and Training / ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Spina, Joseph	Brampton North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant (small business) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur petites entreprises) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
<b>Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W.</b>	Carleton	PC	Minister of Environment and Energy / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Stewart, R. Gary	Peterborough	PC	
<b>Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris</b>	Etobicoke West / -Ouest	PC	Speaker / Président
Tascona, Joseph N.	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	PC	
Tilson, David	Dufferin-Peel	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General / adjoint parlementaire du procureur général
<b>Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H.</b>	Markham	PC	Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Turnbull, David	York Mills	PC	chief government whip / whip en chef du gouvernement
Vankoughnet, Bill	Frontenac-Addington	PC	
<b>Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble</b>	S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	PC	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones
Wettlaufer, Wayne	Kitchener	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Wildman, Bud	Algoma	ND	New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Wilson, Jim	Simcoe West / -Ouest	PC	
<b>Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth</b>	Waterloo North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Wood, Bob	London South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / adjoint parlementaire du président du Conseil de gestion
Wood, Len	Cochrane North / -Nord	ND	
Young, Terence H.	Halton Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant (colleges and universities) to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire (secteur collèges et universités) du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Vacant	Windsor-Riverside		



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